A GUIDE TO NOBLE LIVING

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

Published By
THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192
Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, U.P., Himalayas, India

Price] 1982 [Rs. 5.00

A GUIDE TO NOBLE LIVING

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc. No. 3016 (D)
Dated 3/2/2016

Published By

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192
Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, U.P., Himalayas, India

Price] 1982 [Rs. 5.00

Published by Swami Krishnananda for The Divine
Life Society, Shivanandanagar, and printed by him
at the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press,
P.O. Shivanandanagar, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal,
U.P., Himalayas, India

First Edition .. 1973
Second Edition .. 1982

(3,000 Copies)

All Rights Reserved By
The Divine Life Trust Society

Released on the Auspicious Occasion of the
66th Birthday Anniversary of
H.H. SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ

PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

A spiritual treatise may or may not satisfy the habits of the intellect, but, doubtless, it has to cater to the needs and the demands of the soul and the intuition. As such, the words of a saint, a messenger of the Spirit, speak to us during the calm and splendid durations we have with our soul within. H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj voices silently to the inmost core of the thinking man. His talks do more intimately appeal directly to the hearts of aspirants.

The present publication commands a position in the field of spiritual literature almost akin to the one that Bhakti-Yoga occupies among the group of Yogic paths leading to the emancipation of the individual. Bhakti-Yoga is like a highway train picking up passengers from the different stations they happen to come from. It sees no distinction of social status and rank and qualification but only a genuine zeal to get into and tread the way. Everyone, without distinction, can have access into this gate; all can enter into this temple of this unique Yoga. Mundane distinctions disappear before the mansion of the Supreme Friend and Lover of man. All can find their equal right before God; for the Divine Spirit is no respecter of social differences and man-made restrictions. This small book on the Life Spiritual, in the same wise, greets a novice to answer his query as to what the real purpose of life is, what the meaning of true Yoga is, what the spirit of true renunciation is, and how to start with virtue, pass through holiness and culminate in Godliness. The advanced seeker in the midst of the high pitch of conflict and struggle finds here and there spotlights to remove his darkness of doubt and dilemma and suddenly comes across solutions to his conflicting problems in the split of a second. And the more perfected soul would be delighted at heart because the literature deals with matters concerning divine living, abounds with talks on the glory of God, liberation, bliss and peace and narrates the exemplary ideals of great devotees like Sri Hanuman of the Ramayana fame, and the brilliant inspiring life and example of saints who lived up to the modern context of time.

The book is universally inspiring and guiding. Being mostly general in treatment and slightly abstract in character, any approach to it with a motive of finding the particular in the form of details of techniques and practices of various systems of Yoga would be misplaced. The work may simply be taken most reverently as the message of a saint on the path of *Nivritti* (renunciation) and *Yoga*. At the same time, the value of the book is no less than the usual text-books on Yoga and Vedanta; the latter deal specifically with particular aspects and systems of Yoga; they concern the need and purpose and aim of their chosen trainees and students of the more rigid systems. On the contrary, the need for a treatise of this kind is first and foremost in respect of the general readers and the Sadhakas; for it couches life in all its peripheries. The general principle always comes first and the particular later.

The work is a collection of Swamiji's writings and speeches which are in the form of essays, articles and short discourses delivered on different occasions. The first five articles have been adapted from Swamiji's inspiring addresses at the Satsangas in the Ashram at the Headquarters and they serve as a clarion-call to those who are in a slumber as yet to the life of the Spirit on account of ignorance of the true meaning and purpose of life; and after awakening them, infuse new strength, courage, hope and vigour into their lives by reorienting their movement towards God. Then comes the discussion of the basic principles of Yoga, and the primary requirements it calls for from its students. The juvenile curiosity which looks upon Yogic life as a rosy path has been cautioned and the possible obstacles that beset the path have been pointed out. The norm of conduct of a Yoga student with relation to the society around the humanity in general has been set forth as being one of service, equality and sympathy, especially. We have to follow the footprints of wise sages who have already trodden the arduous steep mountainous path of spirituality. A devotee of God, the Almighty, becomes invulnerable due to the infinite strength provided to him by the eternally inexhaustible source of power and energy, Purushottama, the Lover and Friend of man, a Presence at once manifest in all things, a Power pervading the universe with innumerable forms as His mighty World-Yoga. This point has been vividly and interestingly brought out by drawing a picture of contrast between Hanuman and Ravana. The true concept of Devi-worship and the need for an overcoming of all that belongs to the low, base and bestial nature. Whereas the epicurean's charge has been refuted and given a challenge with the true spirit of renunciation, attention has not been slackened to remind the austere recluses of their responsibility and sacred, supreme duty. The human mind, with its structure and psychological working, has been broadly analysed and then sufficient hints on practical Sadhana have been given. The modern man has not been spared on any lame excuse in his attempt at abolishing the worship and adoration of God from his life on the ground of lack of time and opportunity. He has been supplied with a novel method of Sadhana in the form of mental union in Yoga while offering the physique to the work on hand. This is the concluding chapter of the book. Thus, through the seemingly unconnected topics runs an interconnecting link like the thread into which beads of pearls have been strung to make a beautiful garland.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

CONTENTS

Pages

Publishers' Preface iii
The Unbroken Link 3
Eradicate Desires and Rest in Your Desireless Blissful Self 6
The Sadhaka and the Worldly Man .. 8
Be Up and Doing 9
Use Not the Intellect for Increasing Laziness 11
Necessity, Base and Supreme Factor of Yoga 13
Sadhana 15
The Obstacle-Triad 17
Not a Rosy Path 22
Serve Humanity and Seek Divinity .. 28
Be Like the Third Skull 30
Be Simple and Guileless, Humble and Enduring 33
Follow Their Footprints 37
The Devotee Becomes Invulnerable .. 40
A Contrast Between Hanuman and Ravana 42

Pages

The Role of a Sadhu 46
Destruction Precedes Construction .. 51
The Epicurean's Charge 55
Guru and Disciple 58
Religion 60
The Glory of Sannyasa 64
Analysis of the Human Mind 71
Hints on Practical Sadhana 83
Sadhana for Modern Man 110
Aims and Objects of The Divine Life Society 118

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDAJI MAHARAJ

A GUIDE TO NOBLE LIVING

THE UNBROKEN LINK

This holy land (Bharatavarsha) of ours with its lofty culture has been uniquely blessed and privileged by a continuous and unbroken stream of spiritual teachers, saints, devotees and savants to guide and uphold the arduous march of its men, ever reminding them of the true goal of life and preventing mankind from slipping into erroneous tracks at each critical moment. Look at our ancient history and you will find not a single generation which has been deprived of God-sent men who would ever hold high the banner of truth along with their clarion-call to humanity to remain ever vigilant and never forget the real purpose of life.

They never proclaimed anything as a conclusion of mere intellectual activity and labour of the thinking faculty but they did so on the basis of the profound authority of direct intuitional realisation of the Absolute. So whatever these ancient sages and Rishis have proclaimed in the Upanishads, it is from their direct experience in the core of their inmost spiritual being. They did not care to adduce any argument in their support or to induce acceptance. They just stated boldly what they *knew as Truth.* And what is it that they have declared? It is this:

"O children of Immortality!
Ye are not the perishable physical body
Nor the ever-changing mind, nor the reasoning
intellect.

But ye are the master of all these,
The supreme conscious-Being, the unattached witnessing
Spirit or Atman beyond the reach of the mind and the intellect,
Different and distinct from body, mind and intellect.
Realise this fact and live in the awareness of your true Spirit".

They have also shown the path that leads to this grand experience. We, as true descendants of our ancient Rishis and worthy sons of Bharatavarsha should never lose sight of the great purpose of life which can be nothing else than God-realisation. Let no one be deceived by becoming a travesty of alien culture in the name of the so-called material prosperity.

The goodness of a tree is known ultimately by its fruits either sweet or bitter. The past two great world-wars bear the testimony of the destructive horror of the so-called advanced civilisation under the most modern scientific knowledge.

"I would like to bow down from a pretty distance to such deceiving knowledge and prefer one thousand times to be called the ignorant and cling fast to my soul-uplifting culture and heritage which guarantees me purity, manliness, divinity, character, integrity, unselfishness and love for mankind."

Be careful, brethren, that scientific knowledge devoid of religion and spirituality will quicken only the world-doom since it provides in the hand of the all-devouring brutal instinct of the degenerated man another addition of deadly power for self-destruction.

Power verily corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Therefore neglect not the foremost duty of building up character, nobility, godliness and love for the search of your true nature.

ERADICATE DESIRES AND REST IN YOUR DESIRELESS BLISSFUL SELF

The spiritual Sadhaka daily comes nearer and nearer to God. Day by day, his spiritual struggle brings for him more and more freedom from earthly bondage, from Maya. Every desire annihilated adds new strength to the enhancement of this freedom. It is a fresh addition to the store of inner happiness.

Here are some of the methods of thinning out the Vasanas (desires).

(1) *Self-denial*: Curtail all unnecessary wants, activities and mixing. Too much of contacts with friends and promiscuous mixing stimulte the old habits, previous Samskaras (latent impressions). Hence worldly contacts should be reduced as far as possible. Exert a little pure will. Deny then and there and say, "No, I don't want it, since it is not going to help my spiritual well-being." Seek the counsel from the pure intellect and it will give you sure protection at the required moment. Slowly you will develop an attitude of looking at sense-objects as poison and delusive, a clever entrapment of Maya and then you will naturally deny them for your spiritual welfare.

(2) *Vigilance*: The past Samskaras are like dormant forces and coiled-up potential energies which sometimes assume violent forms and produce tremendous agitation in the mind, totally confuse and

bewilder it and make it assume the very forms of desires. This is called Vishayakara Vritti.

So vigilance must be resorted to. No amount of leniency should be given to the mind.

(3) *Non-cooperation*: All the senses must be withdrawn slowly from their respective centres of pleasure. If you go on denying all the desires, then they will die a natural death.

So continue this incessant process of dynamic self-denial and become a conqueror of all desires. Thus having washed clean the mind of all Vasanas, the aspirant ultimately rejoices and sports in the pure consciousness, bliss and self-delight of Atmic awareness.

THE SADHAKA AND THE WORLDLY MAN

Without Vasana-Tyaga (annihilation of desires), Mano-Nasa (death of mind) cannot be effected and without Mano-Nasa there can be no hope of Kaivalya or immortality.

A perfectly desireless state is absolutely peaceful and blissful.

The spiritual seeker gradually thins out his mind, reduces his desires and at last totally dies to all the worldly Vasanas and gets a final release from Samsara.

On the other hand the worldly man daily brings fresh addition to the bundle of his desires. He creates new wants to experience new sense-pleasures and thus fattens the process of entanglement in Samsara. At last he finds himself under thick chains of bondage. He gets entrapped, deceived and caught by Maya and misses the goal of life.

Thus the spiritual aspirant and the man of the world stand poles apart in comparison. One soars high by the upward pull of his higher nature and the other hurls himself down into the abyss of Samsara by the downward pull of his lower nature.

BE UP AND DOING

Today only is yours. Yesterday is gone. There is no certainty of tomorrow. Hence make the best use of the present moment, the present life. Be up and doing. Live this day a life of helpfulness and worshipfulness. Waste not your precious time in vain gossips, scandal-mongering, talebearing, vain hopes and chitchats lest you may pass out regretted and lamented.

Who knows whether this golden opportunity would come again or not? So when everything is conducive for rising high towards the shining peaks of lofty ideals, take care that the enthusiasm dies not due to slackness.

So do not postpone for tomorrow. Postponing means losing for ever.

Remember this.

Towards the world, let our motive be one of goodness, friendliness and selflessness. Let us live for the good and peace and happiness of others, even of those who deceive us and inflict injury upon us. Mind not dear Sadhaka! For this is not your lasting abode. You are a quick passenger to your eternally shining original abode. So, on your way, while you are here for a short while, try to bring about a little happiness to others, try to lessen the discomfort, fear and anxiety of your neighbours, try to wipe out tears from others' eyes. Try to remove as far as you can the gloom, despair and sorrow of your fellow-beings.

This should be the attitude for your Bahiranga Jivan (external life, relative living).

Through Paropakara (doing good to others) you worship the one Supreme Lord residing in the hearts of all, for *"Eko Devah Sarvabhuteshu Gudhah"*—the one Lord hides in all beings.

So bear sympathy for the poor and try to see Him through the humblest of His creation.

As to our Antaranga Jivan (internal living), it should be one of Yogic life, living in constant awareness of your divine relationship.

Increase the stuff of Sattva by daily prayer, worship, Bhajan, Kirtan and Japa-Yajna. This Japa-Yajna is the surest, safest and easiest path specially suitable for Kali Yuga, this iron-age.

Sometimes the mind would refuse to put forth effort on account of inner Tamas (inertia) and lethargy. Don't yield to this inertia. Remove it by constructive activity, study and Kirtan.

Remove slothness by being 'Up and Doing'.

USE NOT THE INTELLECT FOR INCREASING LAZINESS

A humorous but meaningfully significant incident is called back to my mind that can to some extent depict the baneful and curious motive behind all the so-called advancements in modern science and technology. One gentleman once asked his enthusiastic son who happened at that moment to be a student in some institute of technology, "Dear boy, what will you do if you become a good and renowned engineer"? The boy replied, "Dear Daddy! I will invent a machine which will be capable of giving me all that I desire by merely switching a button". The father then asked the same question to his second son who was implicitly following the ideal of his elder brother.

"What do you intend to do when you too become an adept in modern technology as your ambition is keen after this?" And the juvenile younger boy instantly replied, "Father, I must invent another machine which will be used for the purpose of pushing the button of my elder brother's marvellous machine and thus save us from the trouble of pushing the button quite often for our variegated needs".

This illustrates the modern trend of scientific minds. So much of Tamas or inertia enters into man's nature as a curse of luxuries and comforts that a time comes when he hesitates, even to switch on a button!

Instead of applying the intellect for inventing more and more physical comforts and machinery even to do your daily work, let this precious faculty be utilised in discriminating the real from the unreal. Let the intellect be directed in the quest of the permanent, eternal, imperishable and all-blissful Atman. Thus make life transformed to enjoy real and undecaying happiness born of divine communion. Finally rest in the abode of supreme blessedness devoid of all fears and sufferings.

NECESSITY, BASE AND SUPREME FACTOR OF YOGA

Yoga bases its origin upon the necessity felt by man to rid himself of all sorrow and suffering and to free himself forever from bondage brought about by finite existence and to attain final victory over all fear, even over death itself. To this great problem, Yoga comes as the practical solution. Yoga plainly states that man is essentially of the nature of Bliss, Perfection, Peace and Freedom. The loss of his awareness of that oneness with the infinite, all-perfect source of his being is the very cause of his involvement in this earthly process called life. To regain a true awareness and to realise once again his everlasting oneness with the Divine is actually the practice of Yoga. The means of overcoming the defects and imperfections of this earth-life and thus experiencing union with the Supreme constitutes its structure. Yoga shows how to overcome the imperfections of the lower nature and to gain complete mastery over the mind and senses.

All the techniques of Yoga require perfect ethical and moral purity. Purity is the foundation of Yogic life. One cannot be a bad man and yet try to practise Yoga. One cannot allow himself to be impure, insincere, untruthful, deceitful and harmful to others and at the same time try to practise Yoga. There cannot be any spiritual realisation when interior circumstances are imperfect. There cannot be any religious practice or true interior life when moral goodness is not deeply implanted in the being. One has to be rooted in goodness, in purity, in truth and in selflessness. Half of the process of Yoga is in getting thus perfectly established in ideal moral conduct. When this basis has been established, then the application of the techniques of Yoga is like the striking of a dry match upon the match-box and immediately there is a flame. Without this basis, it is like trying to strike and ignite a wet match upon a cake of soap—nothing happens.

In all phases of Yogic life, the supreme factor is the grace of God. Call it what you will. It is the grace of the Supreme Essence, the source of all existence in which alone man realises his true nature and his deathless divinity. All the practices are purposeful when they make man move towards God and merge into oneness with Him. This is the purpose of Yoga.

SADHANA

Sadhana is the purpose for which we have come to this plane. It is this earth-plane alone upon which Sadhana for Self-realisation can be done.

Sadhana means right living—living a God-oriented life. Root out falsehood from your heart. Become an embodiment of Truth.

You are ever-pure and spotless. Express that ever-pure, spotless nature in your thoughts, words, in the pattern of your desires and inner motives in your daily life. Practise that, live that, radiate that —that is Sadhana. You are the Truth, the Supreme Reality. Express this Truth.

Let not your life be a contradiction of what you are. Be WHAT YOU ARE. This is the essential Sadhana. It is the direct path to live a divine life, to be divine in thought, word and deed.

The supreme Sadhana is a life lived divinely where every act, thought and word is permeated with the divine quality.

Be victorious over circumstances. Even when you are working do not leave this inner awareness. Assert it at every moment in all things. Be the conqueror of your mind, the subduer of your desires and a master of your destiny; for you are the Master.

May you develop noble character and walk the path of the good and pure, the path of Truth, purity and goodness, and more towards that glorious goal which awaits you This is your birthright which you can claim and experience in this very birth. Do not postpone it. Be up and doing.

THE OBSTACLE-TRIAD

You must cultivate the flowers of Divine virtues in the garden of your heart. It is from virtue that one rises to holiness, from holiness to godliness and from godliness to God-experience. From impurity one rises to purity, from purity to sanctity and from sanctity into sublime spiritual experience.

The ascent of the indiviudal soul unto the shining peaks of the experience of the Absolute on the practical path of Sadhana is attended with three barriers which must have to be overcome. The first one is a state of grossness arising out of a total identification with the body-house in which we reside. This identification has made us feel that we are, ourselves, this body and this body is ourselves.

No matter how much we may mouth the words "I am not this body", yet the very next instant our actual life and behaviour demonstrate our body-consciousness in effect, however much we may assert the contrary. If someone suddenly comes and says: "You fool! You are wasting your time in sitting there; why don't you go and work?", then your temper will immediately flare up and you will be in a state of anger. Vedanta will vanish and the intellect will suddenly give way to the fit of anger that has arisen in the mind due to a long force of habit. Now Mr. so and so, the immortal Atman, Satchidananda, beyond mind and body and beyond all the pairs of opposites, immediately gets up and prepares to fight. Your mind is in turmoil. It is agitated and is thinking: "How can I repay this fellow?" Anger flares up and the mind is thrown into agitation, and you want to go and punch the man in the nose. You have completely and totally forgotten, "I am the peaceful and ever-blissful Satchidananda Atman beyond name and form; the one without a second, all-full, complete and all-bliss".

This is an example of falling down from the beautiful state of your Atmic nature into the ugliness and falsity of your lower nature owing to anger which is a kind of impurity (Mala). Similarly also greed, passion, selfishness, arrogance, envy and jealousy etc., constitute the impurities of human nature and every now and then they spring up and overpower the mind. The Atmic consciousness is then obscured and pettiness, dishonesty, intolerance, pride and the thought of "How dare one address me like this?" come into the mind.

These are all called impurities and are the basic blemishes of the human personality. These blemishes constantly plague the human individual and need be eliminated if you are to rise into a higher state of consciousness.

These impurities constantly put the mind into a state of agitation and activity. They never allow the mind to be calm and serene. As long as these gross impurities draw the mind outward to unspiritual action every moment, you cannot expect to sustain one unbroken current of thought of the Supreme Reality.

Due to impurities, the mind is drawn always into a state of restlessness, outgoing movement and agitation. This is the second barrier called Vikshepa. This has also to be overcome.

Still deeper in your mind is the third barrier called Avarana. It is a mysterious veil over the inner depths of your consciousness which holds you in a state of ignorance of your higher nature. Avarana is non-awareness owing to nescience, the basic ignorance. This veil is made up of the identification of the body-mind-consciousness.

These three,—Mala, Vikshepa and Avarana—have to be overcome gradually, stage by stage in a methodical manner. And then suddenly you see the illumination of Atmic knowledge. You will come face to face with your true nature. You will have this transcendental experience.

The removal of the basic impurities or blemishes can be done by the cultivation of the opposite positive qualities. What do you do when you want to remove darkness? You do not bring mops or brooms to sweep it or sacks to collect it. You bring the positive opposite quality light to remove darkness.

The moment the positive opposite quality comes in, the negative quality vanishes; because the negative quality has no basis. A negative quality is not an independent entity by itself. Mark this very very carefully. Negative qualities really have no force. They only imply the absence of positive qualities. He is a great liar means he has no truth in him. There are no such things as lies but there is absence of truth in this person. The moment he welcomes truth by firmly asserting "I will try to become truthful", he can no longer be called a liar.

Hatred is not a positive quality. There is no such thing as hatred, some dark thing wanting to jump upon you. It means that there is no love, no kindness. So it only indicates a condition of the absence of love, and in one who cultivates love and compassion there is no more hatred. The moment love comes in, hatred vanishes; because the positive is real and the negative is not real. When the positive quality is cultivated, the negative ceases to be.

So, remember, cultivation of virtues is a fundamental part of self-culture leading to spiritual evolution and Divine experience. This is the laying of the foundation as it were. If you want to cultivate a garden from a wild piece of land, the first thing you have to do is to root out all the weeds, the brambles, the undergrowth and remove all such unnecessary things. Then you have to prepare the ground by removing all stones and pebbles and then make the soil fertile.

Thus, in this process of spiritual cultivation, you must work at getting rid of the trash, eliminating all that is undivine, unspiritual, transcending the brute and bestial nature such as greed, hatred, anger, jealousy, selfishness, haughtiness and arrogance. Then you have to grow the flowers of virtues in the garden of your heart. Then alone you will rise unto a state of godliness. "Cleanliness is next to godliness". One should have great deal of zeal in cultivating divine virtues. Through the cultivation of virtues and removal of vices, the oscillating, tossing and restless nature of the mind gets thinned out. Through prayer and meditation the veil of ignorance is torn aside. Now you attain to the state of Reality-consciousness. Your experience is now one of absolute bliss and peace. How can you now describe that grand experience of spiritual consciousness or Divine ecstasy. You will only say, "I am Satchidananda".

NOT A ROSY PATH

Nothing that is worthwhile is to be achieved without undergoing a corresponding amount of pain and suffering. No enduring ideal can be attained without toil and sweat. The seed splits and perishes to put forth the plant. The flower lays its life to give place to the sweet fruit. It is in the furnace that gold emerges from the ore. Even so, the price of sainthood is to be paid in the interim period of utter loneliness, privation and struggle which the aspiring soul passes through.

The spiritual path demands a rigorous Tapas and heroic endurance at one time or other. This has been the common experience of all such earnest souls who, fired by the ideal of Self-realisation turn their back upon the world of vanity and folly. Because the truth remains that the link between man and God is forged in the furnace of trial and adversity.

Gurudev says, "There is no royal road in spirituality. Adversity develops the power of endurance and will-force. Adversity develops fortitude and forbearance. All the prophets, saints, Bhaktas and Yogins of yore had to struggle hard against adverse circumstances. God puts His devotees under severe tests and rigorous trials..."

You will also be tested by God for your sincerity and patience. He will make you utterly helpless and watch and see whether you have devotion for them or not in such straitened circumstances. We cannot say exactly what form these trials will take. But the sincere devotee is never afraid of these tests.

A grim endurance of all vicissitudes and a dogged resolution to persevere to the end are essential if one has to realise the Ideal. For indeed, rough and rugged is the march on the steep and narrow way!

Gurudev once cautioned a group of aspirants to be alive to the stealthy power of unconscious habits. "For", he said, "Man is sybarite by nature. You may be very zealous in your austerity and vows in the beginning. But if you are not on the guard, slowly will the vigour be relaxed; comforts will creep in and you will be caught hopelessly. If the body is allowed to relapse into softness and luxury, you will find it well nigh impossible to discipline it again."

Instances are not lacking where recluses in solitude, after years of asceticism, have slowly slipped into an easy-going life by coming in contact with admiring devotees. When they come to be well-known, devotees gather round volunteering to do personal service. Not wishing to disappoint the eager disciples, the ascetic allows a little latitude at first, but it grows upon him until he is a slave to every sort of luxury.

Mind immediately takes advantage of even the least sign of weakness in the aspirant. It is like a tiger crouching on its haunches about to spring. Swamiji exemplifies in his life the ceaseless and ever-alert vigilance against the sudden onslaught of Samskaras. He is a model to all, even to highly advanced aspirants—in his avoidance of the proximity of women. Devotees, many a time, seek to touch his feet while prostrating; never does he allow this to happen. No touch of a feminine hand is allowed, be it that of a real devotee even.

You might have read about a class-mate of Swami Vivekananda, a remarkable young man, a monk of great renunciation and determination, who after years of admirable self-control, Nishkama Seva, finally became hopelessly entangled in a woman's wiles. Swami Turiyananda has cited this example in one of his intimate talks with Sadhakas.

It is not the question of being pure or impure. The very proximity of persons of opposite sex is dangerous, however pure and well-meaning the persons be. Moving with women unleashes a primitive force quite beyond the easy control of the human being. The woman herself may be spotless, but the Lord's mighty power of Maya may work through her unawares. The hidden power of lust in the heart of men begins to manifest in feminine presence and proximity. Not without reason, the great contemporary saint, the revered Malayala Swami of Yerpedu, strictly forbids the careless mixing with persons of opposite sex. He once told a Sadhaka who had unwittingly allowed a lady to minister to his comforts, while he was ill, and had his feet shampooed by the kind-hearted nurse, "If I were to name an atonement for this lapse of yours, I would have you apply glowing coals to the portion of the feet touched by the lady."

For an aspirant, all contact with women must be absolutely tabooed. Women may be revered, trained and elevated; but it must be in separate institutions. Different Ashrams should be maintained for them and it is from a respectable distance that even advanced souls should have dealings with them.

How supra-human beings, like Brahma, Narada and Visvamitra, succumbed to this influence of sex, is vividly brought out in the Hindu scriptures. Whether one is inclined to treat the scripture as authoritative or not, the lessons they embody and seek to place before men have to be taken at their worth. They advocate, in unmistakable terms, the avoidance of all contact with the opposite sex to the spiritual aspirant. It is no use attempting to ignore the fact that in the vast majority of people, the sexual craving is very intense; hence the necessity for and the rationals behind such an uncompromising attitude and such drastic advice.

Spiritual life is for eternity and realisation is infinite. It is not like a period of work, giving place later to a nice vacation.

The same high pitch of purity and discipline has to be maintained if life is to mean anything at all. No relaxation of vigour and caution can be afforded. For the mighty power of cosmic illusion is not a trifle to be toyed with. A fit of passion is enough to blow away the result attained by years of slow and painstaking effort. Remembering this, let the aspirant be ever 'watchful unto prayer' as the mystics have said.

It is well to keep before our minds the example of a certain saint of Madurai of whom it is narrated that, while he was passing aimlessly through the streets of that city, he was accosted by an irreverant and arrogant merchant who jocosely asked the saint which was the superior of the two, namely the beard of the saint's chin or the tuft of hair on the tail of a donkey! The saint looked up silently at the questioner for a few moments and quietly resumed his wanderings.

Several years had passed away when the merchant was one day summoned urgently to the saint's presence. The waggish merchant, having long forgotten all about his sacrilegious humour of bygone years, went wondering what the matter might be. He found the venerable saint on his death-bed and at his approach, the dying one raised himself slowly and whispered to the merchant thus, "My good man! you asked me a question several years ago. Well, my beard is superior to the donkey's tuft; so you have your answer and forgive me for my delay."

The merchant asked why, after years of silence, the saint chose to give an answer to the impertinent query now, during his last moments. The saint, with great humility, replied, "Precisely because these are my last moments. Doubtless I might have even then answered you as I do now, but I dared not; for my dear brother, so very mysterious, so incomprehensible, is the Lord's illusive power that I knew not what I would do or be the next moment. Man's achievements are of no avail before Maya's charms. She reigns supreme on the stage of the divine play. None can dogmatically say that he is beyond all temptation. It is the Lord's grace alone that not only makes a man pure but also keeps him pure to the end. Man on his part is but to exercise a constant humility and an active vigilance. All these several years I have striven to keep myself spotless and devout, putting faith on His love and mercy to maintain my purity. I have now but a few moments more to live and there is no chance of a slip; therefore with my last breath I answered you confidently." And the saint sank back and gave up his body.

The great lessons of genuine humility and an unremitting caution have to be firmly grasped and borne in mind by everyone who would make any headway on the slippery path that leads from "darkness to Light", from "the unreal to the Real", and from "mortality to Immortality."

SERVE HUMANITY AND SEEK DIVINITY

O Blessed Friend! When will you wake up from this deep sleep of ignorance and enter into the reality of your true real nature—Divine Nature? You are not merely the body and intellect.

Come, come wake up now. Claim your birthright. Recognise your identity. Enter into experience of the Divine Joy, Peace and Wisdom which is your Eternal Svarupa (essential nature). O Beloved friend! O Radiant Atman! Do it now. You are indeed Divine. You are unchangeable, infinite, immortal Atman.

Life is Sadhana. Living is spiritual process. All actions—mental, verbal and physical—constitute Yajna. Yajna or self-giving is the fundamental principle and Paropakara (doing good to others) is the Mulamantra (the basic sacred formula) of this life.

Live with understanding and wisdom. Understand the meaning and purpose of life. Understand your real nature and why you are here. Here on earth you are but a passing traveller. Here all things are temporary. All things pass. Therefore seek the eternal. Your real nature is not earthly. It is spiritual and deathless. To realise your Reality, your eternal identity is the purpose of your life. While you strive diligently for this inner experience cultivate Ideal Relationship with the world around you. To all beings relate yourself with nobility, sympathy, kindness, love, selflessness and the desire to serve all.

Serve humanity and seek Divinity. Compassion to all is the key to blessedness. Humility is the highest virtue. Truthfulness is the greatest treasure. Self-control is the supreme wealth to possess. Egoism is the worst blemish and hence to be eradicated in toto.

Be an ideal individual. Become a spiritually-illumined soul. Thus crown your life with Wisdom, Peace and Blessedness. You will then become a blessing to all mankind. I wish you joy and peace.

BE LIKE THE THIRD SKULL

We do meditation in the morning and evening, but during our activities and dealings with others during the day we show petty-mindedness and selfishness. That obstructs our Sadhana and nullifies the benefits of our meditation. Penelope, the wife of Ulyses, had many suitors during her husband's absence whom she never wished to marry since she was a faithful and loyal lady. Therefore she devised a trick to deceive them and pass away time. She told her suitors that she was preparing a fabric and until the fabric was finished, she would not accept anyone. They agreed. Every day she went on knitting and, at night she used to undo the work till Ulyses appeared. This is a good example of 'undoing' what had already been done.

We should not apply this sort of 'undoing' to our Sadhana. Let us not add any undivine element to whatever good we might have practised during the morning hours. If, during our actions, we forget our essence and become harsh and dishonest and begin to criticise others—then all these things will undo whatever Sadhana we have done in the hours of meditation. Therefore, our external physical life and activity, our speech and actions, have closely to keep up and enhance the spirit of our meditation, worship and Sadhana.

It is very essential, therefore, that we do not confine our Sadhana only to the quiet hours inside the Puja-room, but divinise all our actions. All our deeds should express our real, inner nature. They should all become spiritualised. This divinisation of all activities is known as Karma Yoga.

The man who leads an ideal life, full of self-sacrifice, full of sweetness and helpfulness alone makes his Sadhana effective and fruitful .

An aspirant must, therefore, be wise. He should not contradict his Sadhana during the active life. He should know where the pot is leaking; otherwise it will be useless to go on filling the pot.

An aspirant should also be careful, watchful, alert and penetrative. The story of the 'Three Skulls' is worth remembering.

Once a Rakshasa (demon) came to a king's court with three skulls and frightened the king to eat him up unless he could correctly point out which was the best skull out of the three. The king asked three days' time and the demon agreed. Then the king asked his court Pandits as to which of them was the best. None could say anything since all the three resembled outwardly all alike.

One intelligent Pandit came and passed a rod through one ear of the first skull, and the rod went straight through the other ear.

Then he made the rod pass through the second skull. In this case, the rod, inserted through one ear, came out of the mouth.

Then the rod was made to pass through the third skull. When inserted through one ear, the rod went right into the chest.

The court-Pandit remarked that the third skull was the best.

The first skull represents that type of people who hear wisdom through one ear and, without assimilating it, leave it through the other ear and forget about it. The second skull represents those people who, after receiving wisdom, are anxious to teach it to others, but do not practise the wisdom themselves. That is the second class of people.

The third skull represents the best type of aspirants, who after hearing wisdom, keep it in their hearts, and try to practise it in their everyday life. So, I would request you all to be like the third skull, cherishing and practising whatever you may learn from your association with the wise, the saints and the sages. May God bless you all!

BE SIMPLE AND GUILELESS, HUMBLE AND ENDURING

All saints and holy men have illumined like the bright full-moon, the dark night of ignorance of the earth-bound souls by their own brilliant example.

They have been men of very simple nature, devoid of all crookedness and cunningness. Simplicity and guilelessness are the characteristics of all men of God.

"Unless ye become like little children, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven." This is the mystic declaration of Jesus Christ.

All truly great saints knew not how to disbelieve any man. They trusted all beings. This was one of the most salient traits in their character. They were guileless. They did not have the so-called shrewdness and cleverness which the worldly man has, which he thinks essential for him to get along. But to get along where? It is a different question altogether. Whether it is getting along in the right direction up to heaven or getting along as quickly as possible to perdition or his own ruin, that is the question. But the so-called shrewdness which the deluded man thinks very necessary for him to get along, the saints were lacking, and they were not the losers for it. They became worshipful. They were immortalised because they were guileless. Their nature was pure and simple, crystal clear, and this is the nature of children. Saints were like children. Childlike simplicity, childlike guilelessness, childlike innocence and crystal-like purity of heart have ever been the common attributes of all the saints.

Secondly that universal quality which characterises 999 out of 1,000 of all mankind is egoism. People are proud. Everyone has his own ego. Man feels "I am something", and he does not like to be disregarded. He wants others to recognise him as something, and he wants to assert himself and this principle of ego, this feeling of one's own superiority, is found to be totally absent in all saints. They were humble. They were meek in spirit. They were lowly in spirit.

"Blessed are the lowly in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." The 'lowly' not from the point of money. He may have everything, but in spite of that he feels that he is a speck of dust at the feet of the Lord. "Lord is everything. I am nothing. Thou art everything my Lord." This is the attitude of all holy people, and this total absence of egoism, and the resultant humility—this is also a universal characteristic of all saints.

Even as egoism is the universal characteristic of the ordinary man in his unregenerate days, the man who is in the grip of delusion, Maya, even so, the universal characteristic of all saints has been perfect humility. Blessed are the meek. And the spirit of the same verse is re-echoed by one of the greatest saints India has produced. He was Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He says, "*Trinadapi Sunee-*

chena—One should consider oneself lower than a blade of grass."

The man of egoism (Ahankara) has not yet learnt this great secret, this truth that Ahankara is the great bar to true refinement and progress of man. He will argue that if a man does not feel himself to be something, he will attain nothing and so too much of humility simply spoils one's life.

But the saints knew better. They knew what was the worth of achievement in this world and what was the truly worthwhile achievement. And they knew that the ego was the greatest obstacle for the attainment of all good things which are of lasting worth, and therefore they were humble, forbearing and forgiving. The lives of saints were full of trials and tribulations. They were persecuted. They had to bear too much hardship. The Lord put them in the furnace of hardship and tribulation, suffering and persecution.

Just as gold is put in the furnace to be purified of all dross and to shine as purified metal, even so, saints are put to much tribulation and suffering, and through all these they manifested three important qualities.

One was that they accepted all trials and tribulations as the blessings of God and bore them. Endurance, fortitude, forbearance—these were always and will ever be the characteristic of saints.

O man, endure.

The symbology of Christ being carried to the calvary brings us this great lesson that man has to silently bear pains and sufferings and through this endurance and suffering only he comes out as gold purified of all dross.

In this process of silently enduring all the vicissitudes and painful experiences of life, they never lost faith. Rather, the more they endured the more were they tried by God and the greater, the stronger, the firmer their faith became. This was the second great trait in them. "O God! Thou may send me the worst suffering, but I will not lose faith in Thee, O Lord." That was the wondrous spirit they had. They never lost faith in the Lord.

Thirdly they not only forgave them who did them harm, but wished all the good for them.

Have such endurance and be humble, O aspirant!

Whatever happens to you, never lose faith and you are sure to be rewarded with eternal life and infinite bliss.

FOLLOW THEIR FOOT-PRINTS

To all those who were instruments in bringing about suffering to the saints their attitude was one of forgiveness and returning good for evil. They tried to do good to the man who did them the greatest harm. To endure everything, to be always firm and unshakable in their faith in the Lord and a spirit of continuous forgiveness—this is the nature of saints, and these characteristics are found in saints all over the world. All people who have risen to spiritual heights and have become worshipful by mankind,—they have always manifested these wonderful qualities. To the saints, God is not a distant entity. To them God is an ever present living reality. Just as we are present to each other, to them, too, God is ever present. They turn to Him at every moment of their life. Whenever they were in need of help, solace, strength, guidance or light, they immediately turned to God even as a child turns to its parents. God was ever present before them and thus their lives were transformed by this ever present awareness of a superior being whom they felt to be their very own. They melted all the differences between themselves and God. They felt themselves to be very intimate with God. They felt God to be their own.

We also express this intimacy with God everyday through our prayers and hymns but we do not feel it intensely enough. In troubles, we trust our money or other external aids of the world rather than the indweller. We lack the sense of God's presence.

On the contrary, the saints, even while living in the external world are always in close contact with the Lord. Therefore they are God-men. They live a life in God and they always consider God to be the only real treasure, the greatest wealth, the only object worth having in life. They never have any other desire. Their desirelessness found ultimate rest in God alone and filled their heart with perfect contentment.

All saints stood above caste and creed. They belonged to one family—the great cosmic family of God. Absolute purity, absolute trust in God, absolute compassion, contentment, desirelessness, perfect guileless nature and total dependence on God alone—these you find in all saints.

Take anyone of the western saints. You will find the same simplicity, the same humility, the same frankness. Even if a man was about to cut their throats, they embraced him. That was the saintly reaction. They were filled with the spirit of this divine quality. In short, they fulfilled the spirit of the Amritashtaka, the last eight verses of the 12th chapter of Srimad Bhagavad-Gita wherein Sri Krishna describes the characteristics of a lover of God, one who is dear to the Lord.

We should also try to delve into the heart of these saints and feel as they felt in their hearts—an overflowing love for God, total forgiveness, motherly compassion, intensity of faith which alone could enable them to bear everything that came on their way and the Himalayan type of perseverance and patience they exhibited on the path of God-Realisation.

And if with our open hearts after removing all bias, we try to delve deep into the nature of the saints, then all the noble traits of their personality will come before us and we can engrave and emulate these noble traits in our hearts. That indeed will be the only effective manner in which we can worship these great souls by which we make an effort to carry out their teachings with sincerity and in a true spirit of respectability and try to emulate their lofty ideals and characters.

This emulation will be the greatest tribute we can pay to these saints.

We should try to emulate them. We should try to emulate the great ideal they have set before us through their exemplary lives. Therefore, to make ourselves adherents of the pattern of divine life which they have worked out, to make ourselves faithful reproductions of these great ideal lives would be the most effective manner in which we can offer our tribute and honour to these saints.

THE DEVOTEE BECOMES INVULNERABLE

It is a common fallacy to suppose that people, who follow the path of devotion, who cultivate devotion, who take recourse to prayer, surrender and the Name of the Lord become effeminate, weak and they are not strong like the Vedantins. The Vedantins are always strong; they bring the picture of a lion, the king of the forest, which fears nothing and is full of strength. Even so, the lion of Vedanta is supposed to roar like a lion.

The real devotee is also equal to the Vedantin. He fears nothing in this world. His strength is infinite, because his strength is not the strength of an individual personality. The source of his strength is infinity in which he has established himself. The source of strength for a Vedantin and the source of strength for a devotee are the same. The Vedantin relies upon Atman, but the devotee relies on the Lord. The Saguna Brahman and the Nirguna Brahman are one. Therefore, if a devotee feels within him a sort of fear or weakness, then, it means that his practice of Bhakti is not correct. There is something lacking in him. Some error is there. If he is a real devotee, he should be perfectly fearless. He should say, "I have got the name of the Lord on my lips. Nothing equals the name of the Lord in the whole world. So, to me no fear from the world can come." So a real devotee fears nothing. Maya cannot do anything to him. He who has got the name of the Lord ever upon his lips, defies the guiles of Maya.

He who has got faith and devotion to the Lord becomes invulnerable. His defences are impregnable. Nothing can happen to him. It depends upon faith.

Such faith was there in Hanuman, whose glorious personality stands radiant before us in the pages of Ramayana. He is the ideal of a true devotee, the devotee who is full of strength, full of courage, full of heroism. True devotion gives strength. Real Prem gives infinite courage and boldness.

What is the source of all strength that sustains an aspirant in his struggle to overcome Maya? The strength is the name of the Lord. That strength is the strength of true love and devotion to the Lord. That strength is the strength of absolute faith in the Lord, faith in the grace of the Lord, faith in His name, to exemplify which the glorious name of Hanuman stands as an ideal before us.

A devotee fears nothing. No obstacle deters him from pursuing the path that leads to the blessed union with the Lord. If this real devotion is not there, then timidity and other things come.

A CONTRAST BETWEEN HANUMAN AND RAVANA

What was the secret of Hanuman's infinite strength, How could he cross the ocean by a single jump?

It is because he was a faithful votary of the Divine Name. It was the Bhakti (unflinching devotion) in him that gave him infinite strength to overcome all Rakshasas. Nothing could stand before Hanuman. He was matchless in his valour.

His strength was infinite, but then he stands in striking contrast to another personality in Ramayana, whose strength was also infinite, at whose strength all the three worlds trembled—Ravana—the person who could lift up the Kailasa, who had conquered all Devas and made the god of Agni (the fire-god) his cook, the god Varuna (the water-god) water his garden, and all the Ashtadikpalas his slaves. The Navagrahas (nine-planet-gods) were steps to his throne. Such was the might of Ravana. But then what did Ravana do? This might of Ravana, this great strength which had to be subdued by no other than the Incarnation of Lord Vishnu Himself, was destroyed and spoiled by Ahankara, and also this was allied to Adharma. Egoism and Adharma completely vitiated and perverted this great power which Ravana possessed and as a striking contrast, we have the grand personality of Hanuman towering in his height, but yet most wondrous, most beautiful, example of perfect humility and self-effacement. Always we see the picture of Hanuman with folded hands.

"Yatra Yatra Raghunatha-Kirtanam,
Tatra Tatra Kritamastakanjalim,
Bashpavari-Paripurnalochanam,
Marutim Namata Rakshasantakam."

With all the strength, courage, heroism and other divine virtues, Hanuman of incomparable humility possessed a heart, which was ever melting in tears of Prem and which ever cherished the attitude of servitude and humility. It is an object lesson for humanity both in its collective aspect, as nations of the world, and in its individual aspect —how they ought to subserve their entire capacities, abilities and strength to the service of the Lord and how the strength and capacity should be characterised by utter humility. That is the great important lesson that Hanuman's personality teaches to mankind for all times. If that is not there, we have the contrast of Ravana and we have the inevitable fall.

Hanuman's name has been immortalised because his infinite strength was accompanied by immeasurable humility—humility as vast and deep as the ocean, and the perfect spirit of obedience and service. Hanuman is ever the servant of Rama, with folded hands and utter surrender, ever waiting for an opportunity to do some service to Lord Rama. He was a perfect devotee, a perfect servant and Sevaka and he was a perfect spiritual aspirant, for he kept his ego always in subjugation. Never do you find him raise his head, he always keeps it bent low. And therefore, Rama gave him the foremost place. When the Pattabhisheka time came, Rama placed Hanuman in front of Him. It was the reward of that perfect devotion, humility, spirit of service, absolute self-effacement and self-absorption.

Once Hanuman was questioned, "What is the day of the week today?" and "What is the star, the Tithi?" To this he replied, "I know neither the day nor the star. I know only Rama, His Name and His love."

His life meant only the love of Rama and the result of such a love is that Rama places him ever in front of Him. That is the ultimate position occupied by him. There is no Rama without Hanuman.

He is the ideal aspirant characterised by ideal humility, perfect surrender and obedience. If you analyse the whole life of Hanuman, it is nothing but unremitting service of Lord Rama to the very end. The most important aspect of Hanuman's personality that we should remember is Rama-Prem and his humility which made him immortal. Therefore, strength when it is allied to devotion to God and worship of God becomes fruitful in immortal glory, becomes fruitful in eternal union with the Lord. The highest that man can achieve comes to him, who allies all his faculties of body and mind with virtue, devotion, humility, the spirit of service, and absolute surrender. To be ever absorbed in the repetition of the name of the Lord and to be ever absorbed in the service of the Lord—this is the shining ideal of devotion that the grand personality of Hanuman presents before humanity for all time.

Such is the glory of his personality and such is the importance of this ideal personality to us, spiritual aspirants as well as to all human beings in this world —to ally strength with Dharma and thus to attain the divine realisation of eternal oneness with the Lord.

THE ROLE OF A SADHU

People on this earth can be divided into three broad classes. The first type of people believes only in this life on earth. The second type consists of people who do a little service, but lack the spiritual vision. There is the third type of beings in whom, the spirit of enquiry is awakened, in whom a higher discrimination is working, who conceive of life, not as some period of existence to be finished here, after which they don't know—and, therefore, are not concerned,—what is going to happen. They conceive of this life as an opportunity, given for attaining something higher, which belongs to a sphere transcending this. These Sadhakas have also got a knowledge that in essence they are not earthly, and that their life does not end with this earth-life. They have some glimpse that their life is really eternal existence in self-awareness, and of the nature of peace, bliss and wisdom. They think that their earth-life is a temporary bondage.

They are impatient that somehow or other they should recapture the pure experience of that real life, which is theirs in truth. Therefore, they use this present earthly existence for carrying on a determined struggle, so that they may transcend this ignorance and regain that experience, the eternal life in the spirit. They are known as aspirants and seekers.

In order to bring together this class of people who are living for a spiritual ideal and to inspire it and take it near that spiritual goal, societies like the Divine Life Society have been founded by men of realisation, like Sri Gurudev. The Sadhu's Federation was started with an additional aim, i.e., to gather together all the forces in the form of the various devotees, so that a unification may be brought about among all saintly persons—a sort of universal brotherhood of seekers, aspirants and Sadhakas. There is a prevalent idea that a Sadhu means a Sannyasin putting on ochre-robes. Swamiji says 'No' to this. A Sadhu or a Sannyasin is one in whom the spiritual ideal is the only ideal, whether he is a householder or a renunciate.

In what way shall we be able to propagate the Sadhu-life, the life of divine quest, and what can we practically do in our own walk of life to awaken more and more people to the greatest sublimity of this life of seeking after God? Sadhus form a class diametrically opposite to the 'normal man' of the world. If the man of the world holds a certain thing as desirable, the seeker looks upon it as something more insignificant than dust. What is pleasurable to the worldly man is extremely painful to the seeker. What the man of the world regards as necessary for life, the seeker regards as the greatest obstacle to real progress. And, in the very conception of progress even, the two are totally opposed to each other. If this is true, then the Sadhu must be a misfit, in the world! To some extent it is true. But the real Sadhu is not a total misfit. The Sadhus' community forms only a minority in the world. A Sadhu has got tremendous amount of adaptability.

He knows that God Himself is tolerating the world and so he is also prepared to tolerate the world.

The Sadhu is essentially universal. Though he looks at the world with pain in his heart, he has great tolerance. He adapts himself with others, but is firm in his own ideals.

Look at Sri Swamiji—you have a living example of this truth in him. Sometimes politicians come and air their views and place their problems before him. He listens patiently to them, and he gives the advice as though he is very much interested in these problems, while all the time he is in a consciousness which makes him realise that it is like a wisp of smoke.

These saints know that this worldly life is meaningless. The only meaning it has got is that it can be taken as a field of Sadhana. What we think of the life of animals, the enligtened souls too think the same of the life of an unprincipled man who leads a purposeless life.

You cannot get happiness from this world. If you go to a neem tree, pluck a fruit from one branch and then eat it, you discover that it is bitter. Imagining that you made a mistake by choosing to pluck from that particular branch which alone might be yielding bitter fruits exclusive of other branches, you suddenly change to another branch, pluck a fruit from it and find that it is bitter too.

How can you get a sweet fruit from a neem tree? Expectation of pleasures from worldly objects is exactly similar to this. No happiness can be got from the world.

A Sadhu knows this very well. Sometimes, on account of previous Samskaras, the Sadhu may deviate from the path just a bit, but he is never eternally lost. In the aspirant or seeker, there is always the Viveka and Vichara alive. Therefore, the reaction of Nachiketas to the temptations of Yama, is the reaction of a Sadhu to worldly pleasures.

The Sadhu, intent on treading the path of Sreyas (real good) tries to cut at the very root of the cause of Preyas, the apparently pleasing, by means of prayer, Japa of the Lord's name, Sankirtan etc. The hall-marks of all seers are more or less the same —compassion, selflessness, purity, oneness, renunciation, tolerance, and above all, returning good for evil. There are many examples from the lives of saints to illustrate this.

Therefore, in order to be able to propagate the Sadhu ideal, the ideal of divine quest, the quest after Truth, I pray with folded hands that you should:

1. Get all the books on the lives of saints, that you can and study them.

2. Hold a Satsanga in your own house and narrate the lives of saints to your family and children and friends.

3. Save the money that you waste on luxuries and with that amount print and distribute widely leaflets and pamphlets embodying the lives of saints.

Thus your own life will be transformed. Thus thinking constantly of saints, you will yourself become a saint. And, you will help others transform their lives, too, and grow into saints. This is the best and the most practical way, in which you can promote the ideal of a Sadhu life.

DESTRUCTION PRECEDES CONSTRUCTION

The phenomenon of destruction necessarily preceding a new birth is found in every aspect of creation and evolution upon this earth. Similarly in the realm of the spirit when the seeker has set himself to rise into the transcendental state of Paripoornata or perfection, fullness, bliss, eternal life and infinite peace, light and joy, when he starts upon this process, he finds that he is bound down by many things which do not allow him to rise up to that desired state of spiritual felicity and bliss. Numerous elements of this old human self, many undesirable factors of the lower aspect of mundane life, hold him down, trying perpetually to keep him bound to ignorance, darkness, delusion and Anatmic tendencies. This lower aspect of the individual soul in the form of the various weaknesses and defects of the flesh is known by the name of Papa Purusha or the Pasu —which need be destroyed and given as Pasu-Bali on the altar of Daivi Shakti (the Divine Mother of Power).

If an aspirant really and earnestly desires to attain to Supreme Peace and Bliss, then he must be resolutely prepared to do the preliminary breaking process that is absolutely essential before he can be free to rise up from the old personality and soar into the empyrean realm of the spiritual Consciousness full of bliss and peace. If his earnestness makes him ready to die to his lower-self, then he can be called a real worshipper of Kali, the fearful Mother Divine, the consumer of all the blackness in the form of the impurities of the soul. She wields Her sword and Her terrible form in order to destroy that which stands as an obstacle to our attainment of spiritual bliss. She is terrible, fearful and destructive to all that is lower in us, impure and unspiritual in us and all that is base and bestial (animalistic) in us.

The individual finds that he cannot fight and overcome these enemies of the higher self through his own puny individual efforts. Therefore, comes the necessity and the meaning of Mother-worship. He invokes that aspect of this Supreme Divine Power that might be capable of doing this process of Pasu-Badha in his own individual case. Therefore he turns to the Mother and lovingly addresses Her, "O Mother! come to me as the terrible, come to me with your fearful sword; come to me as a destructive power in thy fearsome aspect which will be capable of destroying in me that which is unspiritual, unholy and that which is animalistic and base and Anatmic." He welcomes the terrible so that She may release him from the clutches of the evil and the impure that is in him, the Papa Purusha that is in him. This is a voluntary invitation of the destructive aspect of Divine Shakti so that She may, out of Her love and compassion for us, do the work of destroying all the Shad-Ripus (sixfold enemies viz. lust, anger, greed etc.) in us, our egoism, our impurity, our attachments and all the host of the things that form the lower aspect in the individual.

Therefore, the worship of Kali is a little bit difficult, because we find that while one part of the seeker, out of his aspiration and desire for liberation, feels that he should free himself from the base aspect of his personality, yet there is the power of delusion, attachment and Moha in him and this aspect makes it difficult for him to completely destroy his lower self, his attachments and cravings and Trishnas with a resolute mind. While he wants Mother Kali to come and do the work of destruction, at the same time he yet clings to his lower self! Therefore, his worship of the Divine Mother Kali is not whole-hearted.

He is the real worshipper of the Divine Mother, who sets himself resolutely to crush out all attachments, to crush out his delusion, to crush out his cravings, to crush out likes and dislikes, to annihilate his egoism, and thus actively co-operates with the Power which he invokes through Mother-worship. Else, it will be a hypocritical worship.

A real seeker and a worshipper of the Divine Mother should ever exercise his Vichara, Viveka and Vairagya with a resolute and determined mind. It is the exercise of all these higher faculties in order that the lower faculties may completely be destroyed that forms the real worship of the Divine Mother. The Sadhana which the seeker does in order to destroy the impurities of his mind and heart, the Sadhana which he does to burn up his egoism and attachments of the lower nature may constitute the real worship of Mother for him. It is the doing of one's Sadhana with whole-heartedness, intense sincerity and with the entire integral being in the seeker that constitutes the real worship of the Mother.

In every seeker this worship of the Mother is a process that constantly goes on to that extent to which he resolutely opposes the cravings and attachments that try to keep him bound down to his lower existence; to that extent also he daily succeeds in doing a real worship of the Divine Mother.

Let us all pray to the Divine Mother that she may give us all the necessary strength and inspiration and inner power, to put ourselves whole-heartedly upon Her side and join in the work of the Divine Sakti in regenerating us, in annihilating our Pasutva (animal instinct) and bestwoing upon us Divya-Jyotis (Divine Light).

THE EPICUREAN'S CHARGE

The epicureans would always protest that the doctrine of renunciation is mainly responsible for the degeneracy of the nation, that such a doctrine of renunciation has always brought about deplorable weakness and inefficiency in the race which we see everywhere today. Is there any truth in this serious charge?

On the contrary, it is attachment and indulgence that is the real cause of all degeneracy and weakness. Indulgence in earthly objects creates attachment and makes man thoroughly selfish. However active such a man may be and however busily -he might engage himself in the work of the world it becomes merely selfish alone. The average selfish individual cares a pin for the betterment of anyone save himself. His strength and his work is to no purpose for anyone's benefit.

The ideal of renunciation and detachment is the one factor that has kept intact the virility of Bharatavarsha as a nation and race. Take any period in history and you will find that it is the greatest personalities who have risen above all selfishness and ruthlessly renounced all petty attachments that have achieved the greatest good of the country and turned the course of history. Lacking in the spirit of renunciation people have turned selfish. You see the baneful results of this selfishness everywhere in the form of greed, cruelty, corruption, cut-throat competition, jealousy, enmity and on a large scale warfare.

Renunciation broadens the vision and annihilates egoism. It is a higher sense of duty in a spirit of selflessness with a knowledge that the Lord is ultimately the natural heir to all the fruits of actions and sacrifices. Whereas, in the absence of renunciation the vision of the individual is obscured by the cloud of self-seeking and self-interest. There is no courage of conviction. The selfish individual lacks moral courage. When the call to a noble act of self-denial or sacrifice comes, the man imbued with the spirit of renunciation boldly responds to it. Whereas, where there is no spirit of renunciation, the individual wavers and steps back with the suspicion of his self-interest and the welfare of his family getting affected. Such attachment to selfish circles makes him backboneless. That is indeed the basic ill.

It is due to the gross misunderstanding and antagonism to our spiritual heritage that a period of sloth and degeneracy has come over us. No doubt, a great part of this unfortunate spiritual stalemate is due to the prejudiced, unsound and sefish interpretations of our scriptures by a class of Pundits who thrived on the innocent faith and religious fervour of our countrymen. But surely it cannot be denied that the modern, westernised man is equally responsible for this degeneracy due to his utter ignorance of his heritage due to his blunt, shallow and clouded vision to seek the right in a conglomeration of opposite currents, due to his apish antagonism and his vainglorious worship of alien ideals. There can be no real service, no real social work, no real philanthropy, no real patriotism, no real national growth, without the true spirit of renunciation. Renunciation is strength Supreme. Hence it is the central ideal of our race.

GURU AND DISCIPLE

Guru-Kripa * is a wonderful mysterious factor, that will enable the aspirants to seek and to attain the *summum bonum* of life—that is Self-realisation or the vision of God, or Moksha. Whether the disciple is deserving or undeserving, Guru-Kripa sets aside all normal laws that operate in the spiritual plane and takes one to the transcendental Bliss.

There is absolutely not the least bit of exaggeration in the statement and also in the fact that the Guru is always gracious. But then Guru-Kripa has not only to be bestowed, not only to be given, but it has also to be received. In receiving it, we immortalise and divinise ourselves.

There must be joy in obedience to the Guru and there should be a real craving in the spirit that "I should obey". To be a disciple you should obey even in dream. Day and night our Sadhana should be to cultivate this attitude of obedience to perfection. This is the external part of Sadhana.

To the disciple, the nature of the Guru is not human. We should be completely blind to the human side of the Guru and we should be conscious only of the divinity that he is. Then alone will we be able to partake of his Kripa which will transform us from the lower human into the transcendental divine. Our relationship with the Guru is purely divine, purely spiritual.

---

* *The grace of the Preceptor.*

Similarly we have first of all to develop in us the consciousness that we are immortal beings and that we are in essence Satchidananda. Then we can demand that Satchidananda-Consciousness from Guru and the Guru will be able to give that to us.

Patience and humility in the spiritual realm may have to extend over a period of decades. We have to wait like a dog at the door-step of the Guru for a whole lifetime, if need be. There is no loss here. For, the goal is immortal life and freedom.

The best thing is to humbly leave everything to the Guru. "I do not know whether I am a disciple or not. Therefore, O ocean of Mercy and Compassion, pray, make me a proper disciple. Generate in me that Mumukshutva which makes me a disciple and give me the spirit of willing obedience. Help me in trying to follow thy instructions. Help me in trying to mould myself upon the pattern set up by thee"—this must be our constant prayer. And, by this alone shall we be able to draw the Kripa of our Guru and make our life fruitful. And the perfect way of praying is in obeying and in trying our best to be real disciples .

RELIGION

Existence being one, all life is one. All life being essentially one, mankind is also one. Uniformity is the law of the spiritual plane. Though externally, variety or diversity is the Law of Nature in the manifest universe, in its inner aspect uniformity or unity is the Fact of Life. Mankind is one. Thus on the one side we have this unity of mankind all over the universe. On the other side regarding Godhead too we have utterances of sages *'Ekam eva Advitiyam Brahma'*—God is one. Absolute unity has to partake of the nature of oneness. Thus when we go into the fact of religion from this observation and from this attitude or point of view, we are drawn to the conclusion that Religion too is one! Whatever the apparent external differences between religions may be, the inner process of religion has necessarily to be one and the same. For, it implies and comprises man's movement towards Godhead.

The process of religion is the freeing of man from the factors which bind him down to this earthly existence of pain and death. If unrighteousness is a factor in causing suffering, then be righteous. If through untruth man is to be bound to this vexing mortal life, and has to pay a heavy penalty in suffering and pain, then abandon falsehood; be truthful. If by being cruel, you will reap a harvest of pain, torment and suffering, cast away cruelty and practise Ahimsa; be good, be kind, be compassionate. Thus the process of religion develops in a scientific way by studying the causative factors of your bondage to this earth-life and its pains and sorrows. It insists that by living a life of practical religion you can remove all these causative factors of suffering. We must, therefore, lead the life carefully in such a way that we do not commit those things which result in painful experience and existence.

The process of religion slowly works out a scheme of life for you, where you are made to bring into manifestation or into active expression, all these lofty life-transforming elements of the Divine aspect of your being, thus helping to overcome the animalistic aspect and progressively unfold the divine nature that is already the essential part of your inmost Consciousness. Man is made in the image of God; therefore Godliness is the very essence of his real inner being. Hence the external operation of lower nature has to be overcome and cast away, thus giving full scope for the manifestation of the Divine Svarupa (nature) in him. With the unfoldment and the blossoming of the Divine Consciousness in man, he becomes at once linked with the infinite divine existence, Sat-Chid-Ananda. The unity which had been for the time being veiled, as it were by ignorance is re-established. This consummation of the religious quest is to make man declare: "I am not this body, I am not the senses, the mind and the intellect, I am Sat-Chid-Ananda Brahman." This comes from the fullness of experience and the culmination of religious practice which is the experience of your Eternal spiritual Unity with Godhead.

No religion wants you to be tied down to this earthly life. All religions have as their goal the attainment of perfection, freedom and immortality. All religions also have the same process in their essence, whatever be the difference in the ritual or ceremonial details. Real Religion wants the complete annihilation of the lower self, animalistic part of man, and the progressive unfoldment of his divine nature. Thus from the very genesis, we see that the fundamental principle and the ultimate goal of all religions are the same.

Religions have come either from eternal wisdom enshrined in scriptural texts like the Upanishads, Vedas, or from some great men of wisdom inspired by God to give out His message about the way of attaining Him. If we go to the source and look at the great and inspired lives of Jesus, Mohammed, Zoroaster, Buddha and examine the great fountain-heads of the various faiths in the world, we will find that by their practical example, through their exemplary life, they have shown us what is the very soul of the religions which they have given to mankind. They demonstrated the practical living of the religions which they later on gave to their followers and in these personal, living demonstrations they were all at-one.

Let us examine a few of the prophetic utterances of these great messengers of God. Is there any religion that tells us "Utter lies; be dishonest; hate people; develop anger and animosity; be impure; be immoral?" No, "certainly not",—is the emphatic answer. Every religion lays stress upon a life of Truth, Absolute purity, of compassion, of love, of devotion, of tenderness, of a life of sacrifice and of goodness in thought, word and deed. Every religion has given a way of life to its followers as the ideal to be followed, in order to attain the goal viz., ultimate imperishable happiness free from birth and death, disease and misery. The way or the means is one and the same in every great religion. It is a life of purity and devotion practically demonstrated by each one of the prophets, saints and great men of wisdom.

Therefore, from whichever angle you approach and study the subject of religion and spirituality, and from whichever angle you look at it, you find that every important factor is fundamentally one and the same in all faiths. All faiths are one and all prophets have lived the same life of ethical perfection, divine compassion, goodness and awareness of the oneness of mankind. Thus however much we may try to close our eyes to these facts, we find the oneness of all faiths proclaiming itself in a living, irresistible way through the very motive force underlying each faith and religion. In other words, there is oneness in the process of all religious achievements and there is oneness in the ultimate destination which each one of these different religions wants its followers to realise. These different faiths are, as it were, so many beautiful flowers that go to make a beautiful bouquet which we offer at the Almighty Being.

THE GLORY OF SANNYASA

We, as seekers of Truth, have first of all to bear in mind that there is a twofold aspect in which Sanyasa pervades our life. In its purely spiritual aspect, Sannyasa embodies the highest spirit of Nivritti, viz., the total negation of names and forms, and the masterful and purposeful assertion of the One Reality, beyond all names and forms, that is Brahman or the Self. This is the highest outcome of the highest Vedantic Sadhana. This is the innermost core of the culture of Bharatavarsha, the highest and the only aim of human existence according to the Hindu genius. Not only this physical universe, but the countless number of universes that exist as a drop in the infinite ocean of Satchidananda, are negated in order to ever remain immersed in the blissful consciousness of the Atman.

To realise this great end and aim, our ancient sages and saints have interwoven and blended into the fabric of our social life the four Asramas, viz., Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa, to effect a gradual unfoldment of this spirit stage by stage in the life of an individual. In the Brahmacharya Asrama or the student-life one has to live with his Guru, give up all distracting thoughts and give himself up completely to the study of scriptures, living a life of self-control, purity, simplicity, austerity, attention to studies and obedience to and service of the preceptor. In the next stage, he lives an ideal life of a householder with selflessness, self-sacrifice and self-effacement as his mottoes. This is the preparation for the next stage, viz., Vanaprastha, where he has to discipline himself to enter the life of Sannyasa.

In the Sannyasa life, meditation and collecting food for his livelihood were the Dharmas enjoined upon the man who had done all his duties to society, to the nation, to his own family and to his friends. He has now no more attachment and has but to fulfil the one great duty, i.e., of meditation upon the Self, and realisation. Thus in the last stage of the social order, viz., Sannyasa, we have the highest spirit which embodies the soul's upsurge from finitude to infinitude. This is the natural and dynamic movement of every soul which strives to break all finite bonds and cast aside all traces of attachment; and completely shattering the illusion of duality and phenomenal existence, it strives to soar into the splendour of Atmic-Consciousness.

This innate urge of the individual is the spiritual aspect of Sannyasa for which no social order exists. It depends upon the intensity of the soul's urge, upon the thirst for Self-realisation which seizes the Jiva that has been awakened to the transient nature of the phenomena and to the ever-present Reality that is its very nature.

The real meaning and the true glory of Sannyasa can be best understood by devoutly observing saints and men of God who are the living embodiments of the highest and the best in Sannyasa. They personify Sannyasa in the truest sense of the term. Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is verily the greatest exemplar of the true Sannyasa-spirit. Every act of his is the illuminating revealer of the secrets of real renunciation.

The spirit of Sannyasa has been misunderstood to be a sort of retreat to the quiescent and a sort of escapism which arises out of inability to face life. That sort of Sannyasa stands self-condemned. Sannyasa is infinite strength. By escaping from active struggle of earthly life, an individual cannot escape his Prarabdha. This is an illusion which people who do not know the law of Karma hold on to. He who understands, would not dare to enter this fiery order of Sannyasa in order to escape from the struggle of life. Fate will show that he is woefully mistaken. Those very Karmas which he has sought to escape in secular life will stand before him, ruthless and pitiless, and he will have to work them out with compound interest.

Sannyasa is based upon heroism. The real soldier in the Adhyatmic field is he who has dared to see life as it is, who knows that everything in this world is a transitory dream; and having the courage of this conviction that the world is unreal, he has risen above the strong bonds of attachment to sensual objects and has come into the life where the greatest of all struggles has to be worked out —a struggle against one's own nature. There is no greater difficulty in the world than to attempt to wipe out the feeling or consciousness of one's individual existence—'I am good-looking, talented' and all the hosts of associations and Adhyasas which cling to the normal human consciousness—and to instil in its place the grand consciousness, 'I am not this body', 'I am not this mind', I am Satchidananda Atman', 'I am all-pervading and infinite, beyond birth and death, endowed with countless powers.' This is real heroism. In trying to do this one has to give battle to age-old instincts which one has acquired through crores of births through which the Jiva-consciousness has passed. This is not the struggle of a day. It may well be the struggle of a lifetime, and many a time one has to face defeat and downfall.

The heroism of a Sannyasin lies in the fact that he will not be a coward. He admits of no failure, of no set-back. For him all these elements in the struggle are steps which take him nearer and nearer to the grand ideal, to the great goal having reached which he will be able to declare: *Deho naham, Jivo naham; Pratyagabhinna Atmaivaham*—I am not this body, nor the Jiva; I am the innermost indivisible Atman. Every effort put forth is in the nature of an achievement, never in the nature of a loss.

A Sannyasin is one whose life is based upon supreme Tyaga, upon perfect desirelessness. He has to give up all desire for this gross, physical, external world; even the desire for highest enjoyment in heaven. From a blade of grass to highest Brahman, all is dust for a Sannyasin. He rises above them and asserts his Atmic nature. His life is, therefore, based upon renunciation. He does not bestow too much attention upon his physical body, whether it is praised or censured, respected or ill-treated. He ever strives to dwell in the consciousness of the Atman. Reflect over the above and judge what you are.

A Sannyasin's life is composed of the three factors of total renunciation, of a blazing aspiration for the Infinite, of spotless purity. A total renunciation is the negative aspect of his life, the blazing aspiration is the positive aspect in between, and spotless purity is the fabric of which his life is made up. Positive purity is the one condition of the descent of Divine consciousness into his receptacle. Keeping this as the model pattern of the Sannyasin's life, may we all ever struggle to come out of the intoxication of ego-consciousness, of this fever, Kama-Krodha-Lobha-Mada-Matsarya disease, this Samsaric disease which can be cured only through correct understanding of Sannyasa and Brahma-Chintana. If all pain and sorrow are to cease for ever, we have to take to Sannyasa. If our life is to blaze forth as peace and blessedness, Sannyasa, and Sannyasa alone is the one way. For, it is selfishness that is at the root of all miseries upon the earth, of all fights and quarrels, all problems, all wars and hostilities; every sorrow and every misery that is now rampant in human society has at its root the Asuric trait of gross selfishness, where man wants everything for himself and does not care what happens to others in the process of fulfilling this craving for getting things for himself. Sannyasa cuts at the very root of this Asuric trait, for Sannyasa is based upon unselfishness and renunciation of selfishness; and if selfishness is renounced everything is renounced. Renunciation of selfishness means, if I may say so, renunciation of all desires for it is selfishness that takes the form of desire for various things for oneself. Therefore the real spirit of Sannyasa may be stated in the simple term, complete desirelessness. In the light of this consider and evaluate your life and ascertain where you stand. Resolve freshly and strive boldly onward.

It is the duty of every aspiring seeker and earnest Sannyasin to try to take note without fail of two significant factors, namely, theoretical conception of Sannyasa as laid down in the authoritative scriptures and the practical living of Sannyasa in one's life as immortalised by the vital tradition of this great land. What does the true discerning Hindu take Sannyasa to be? We know that Sannyasa is the fourth order or stage in life (Asrama). The individual entering this stage of life gets the Diksha through the Guru and performs Viraja Homa (sacrifice). It is this Viraja Homa that gives you the right clue and right answer to what Sannyasa implies. Viraja Homa throws a flood of light upon the true meaning of Sannyasa. Sannyasa means annihilation of the old, deluded, egoistic consciousness. It means the burning of all desires and attachments in the blazing fire of absolute renunciation. It means reducing to ashes the last vestige of physical consciousness. It is the emergence of a glorious, new consciousness. "I am neither body nor mind, immortal Self am I", is the consciousness of a Sannyasin, whose body, mind, senses, Pranas and the ego all have been offered up in the Viraja Homa flames. It is the supreme renunciation. Sannyasa therefore implies Sarva-Tyaga. Hence his daily vow becomes: "I renounce the pleasures of this world. I renounce the pleasures of the astral world. I renounce the pleasures of heaven".

All desires are annihilated for anything here or in the hereafter. At this juncture we are given a startling revelation. We find that at the top of this great renunciation comes another vow. For, the monk declares: "I will not cause fear to any being". The monk gives the promise of absolute fearlessness to all creatures whereby no living being need fear of any harm from him. By this he pledges himself to Visva-Prema or universal love. For, fear can exist only where harm or pain is forthcoming and the latter are manifest only where hatred or animosity is present. But where love becomes enshrined, only loving service and joy flow forth and all creatures may fearlessly partake of it with perfect assurance and confidence. Such universal love and service are therefore the spontaneous offshoots of Mahatyaga or supreme abandonment of selfishness. Therefore these two great and sublime elements of Tyaga, i.e., abandonment of desires for name, fame and reward, and Seva, i.e., service to the sick, poor and needy,—constitute the sublime elements in the spirit of Sannyasa. Tyaga is for Atmasakshatkara or Self-realisation. Therefore service and Self-realisation form the lofty twin impulses that move in the life of a true Sannyasin taking him towards the attainment of the highest consciousness of Truth Absolute.

ANALYSIS OF THE HUMAN MIND

Man is defined as a rational animal. That part of him endowed with the power of reasoning formed his human nature and this was the centre of his personality, and on one side, the urge for a higher state of consciousness was his essential, ever-pure ever-perfect, divine nature, which was unborn, undecaying, imperishable and of the nature of immortal existence; which was his real being, and which continues even after the dissolution of the physical body, even after the cessation of the functioning of the mind. When one life-span comes to an end at the dissolution of the physical body, all mental processes of the individual come to an end and all sensory processes based upon the thought-process also come to an end. We find that even after one's mind ceases to operate, the consciousness, the real part of the human being continues to be and spiritual researches by sages of intuition have found out that this unit of consciousness continues to travel along a chain, link by link, and human incarnation being a link in the chain, much doubt that there was regarding the continuity of consciousness after the dissolution of the body and cessation of the mental processes was set aside conclusively in two ways. The memory of previous birth in an individual was active and the data or facts given in connection with one's previous existence were put to test and later on were proved to be correct in every minute detail.

In the West the continuity of consciousness has been proved by certain research-workers upon a somewhat lower scale, who were able to contact personalities after the dissolution of their physical bodies and from among some of the foremost figures of such researches who established the continuity of consciousness, we might mention Sir Oliver Lodge, etc. They were very well-known figures in Western literature and amongst Western thinkers. Now, this essential part of man is defined as a thing ever calling him higher up towards noble aspirations, towards struggle for the attainment of a higher consciousness where he is established in an experience where sorrows cannot touch him, where pains of the physical and mental sheaths cease to be and a state of continuous bliss characterises that experience, and at the same time we found that on the other side of the central human, rational nature there was the grosser aspect of his being, the brutal, animalistic aspect, made up of the lower appetites, the lower sensual passions, the impure urges that form a part of every human being.

The world process is the evolution from the lower stages of being to the higher levels and Indian thought holds that as the individual unit of consciousness passes through lower stages of existence, the impress of each stage that it passes through is left in the depth of consciousness and this forms the constitution of his animalistic nature or his impure grosser being, and thus each level of existence leaves within him some trace of the characteristics of that stage of gross existence. In the animal stage, the predominant characteristic is the instinct, which is present in the form of urges over which the being has no control. They are not guided by rational thought and therefore these elements go to form the lower part of the being. The animal subdued and suppressed in the consciousness, the Divine yet to be awakened, it is yet latent, not patent, and in between them is the human nature, ever active, dynamic, expressing itself in various modes in the life of the individual, but swayed between the animal and divine natures. Every being is attracted towards the suppressed, yet active animal nature. Animal nature is active in various degrees in each human being, whereas the divine has not started to be active because it is still sleeping, it is not yet awakened. So the individual is more drawn towards the animal nature, and therefore it was found that human life is a struggle between the undivine nature of the individual and the power of reasoning which said, "I think this is not worthy of me. As a human being I should not do it". These considerations are kept active by the human reason. How? By the force of early training. In the child stage he is trained by the elders to avoid doing certain things and to be ashamed of doing certain things. Therefore, early training, and family heritage play an important part. Suppose, he is born in an educated, cultured family; naturally his instincts are more refined. The reason offers lesser restraints to those who are born in an uncivilised family, very backward, unlettered class; even though they are endowed with reason, it does not operate in the same degree as it does in the case of a man born in a civilised, cultured family. Early training, heritage, and later on his previous Samskaras begin to operate. Samskara means impressions left over by the experiences in a previous incarnation.

Life is progression and in each birth man goes on learning things and he goes on drawing lessons from experience, and all these lessons are there in the form of subtle impressions in the human being. It may be a liability or it may be an asset in the form of impressions carried over from experiences and activities in a previous birth, and these Samskaras begin to operate with the ego or individuality, which begins to function in a human being after a certain age. In one's childhood individuality does not function. Normally, it is only after a certain age that children begin to manifest their individuality, and when they do so, the impressions of their previous birth begin to work, and they also begin to play a part in the reasoning of man direct, induce him to take certain actions and to avoid certain actions. Then we have the restraint of a civilised society. People say, "Do not do this." Certain things are disallowed, certain things are looked upon as something to be abhorred. These influences go to make up the rational part of man and it is a struggle between these factors and the lower urges that make up the conflict in every individual. The factors of self-respect, decency—all these factors begin to operate in a man and they act to a certain extent as a restraint against the urges of his grosser animalistic nature. And supposing he comes into contact with higher minds and begins to hear words of wisdom, comes into contact with elevating literature and hears more and more about divine things, his intellect begins to be educated. Then the power of restraint over the lower self becomes stronger and establishes him more and more upon a human nature. And he becomes a man of self-restraint, self-discipline, a man who has mastery over his lower appetites and urges. And in society, the factor of fear also does act to some extent as a bar upon the mind's lower appetites. Suppose a man acts badly, then he will be punished. So, fear of punishment is there. In the higher planes of evolution the fear is not from the world, but the fear is from punishment of God. All these things go to make him steadily fixed to human level and act as a check upon the too frequent manifestation of the urges of the lower, grosser, impure, animalistic part of the human being. And then, of course, there are occasionally clashes.

Suddenly certain moments come in the life of every human being when he or she begins to ponder upon his or her life, "Have I lived to any purpose? What is the meaning of all these? After all one day I shall have to go out of this scene at one moment's notice." Then he or she feels a sense of dissatisfaction upon the type of life that he or she has been leading and a call comes from some high source and there is an urge for betterment, for rising higher up, for experiencing something which is not merely something mundane, which is not of physical life. At those times man becomes a philosopher and tries to rise above his sensual life. But again in the whirl of his daily activities, he forgets the real purpose of his life. Again moments come in his life when he questions: "Is there a higher purpose in life?" It is indicative of the presence of a higher nature in the being which is capable of being experienced and realised, and it is to enable man to take advantage of this upward wave and rise up from the normal humdrum activities of this physical world that all Godmen constantly keep on urging man, saying: "What are you doing here? How long will you slumber?" They try to rouse again and again the sleeping, essential, divine nature in a human being.

Therefore, analysing the threefold nature of man we found that the process of Yoga, the fundamental work it had to achieve was the liquidation or elimination of the lower, animalistic nature of man and the sublimation of his human consciousness into a higher divine consciousness where he goes beyond the body and mind and he is established in the perennial, glorious experience of his blissful, true Self, his essential nature, the Truth that shines in the innermost chamber of his consciousness, and while dwelling upon this inner anatomy of the movement of Yoga in man, we also mentioned that if this is the process, then all Yogas, however much they may differ in their external modes, are necessary to work out the self-same process, and today we will try to consider how the different Yogas actually work out the one central process and in what way they set about doing this one process. It is like this: We find that man expresses himself through his speech and his actions. Whether a man is good or bad, whether his life is good or bad, can be known only from his speech and actions. If a man is very animalistic, very impure, he does atrocious acts. All his actions are impure, sinful, harmful. He brings pain, sorrow and destruction to others. In his speech he is harsh, he brings about disgrace upon people, he insults people, he pains people. Thus through harsh, cruel and wrong words and actions the Asuric nature of man manifests itself upon this human plane.

All manifestation is through action and speech. But, the Yogins and seers of the past tried to go beyond the actions and the speech of man. They said, "These speeches and actions are more in the form of manifestations of something deep inward and we should first of all know whence they spring forth, and trying to trace the actions and speech of the beings to their source, they found that actions and speech were rooted in thoughts. It was only what man thought and felt in the mind that became later on expressed in the form of speech and action. Speech and action, though they were of tremendous import in the external world and they worked havoc or did wonderful good upon the external field of human life, they were nothing but the outward symptoms of an inner power and that power was the power of thought. It is to do researches in the study of thought that they devoted their attention and all their wisdom and they found that they were confronted with a very mysterious and complicated array of factors in their mind. All those arose in their mind and therefore a study of man's mind was the most important work of Yoga. Analysis of man's mind, minute research into the various aspects of the being of man, how the mind acts, what are its various moods, what is its essential constituent,—all these formed the subject matter of Yogins. They found that mind thinks due to various factors and its manifestations also depend upon various factors. Now, actions and speeches were traced to their root, thought, and that was traced to its genesis. Why is it that a certain type of thoughts come in a mind and not another type of thoughts? What is the thing that sustains thought? They began to make deeper and deeper research and they came to some marvellous discoveries. What were they? They found that thought was not totally haphazard. I will give you some very easy examples which will reveal to you some laws that operate in the realm of each one's mind. What are these laws?

For instance, if you see a doctor, immediately, the thought of dispensary, thought of hospital, thought of medicine come. If you see a soldier in military uniform, the thought of warfare, thought of tanks, guns, the thought of soldiers charging, all these things come to the mind. If you see a lawyer, thought of courts, brief, clients, criminal procedure, judge, sentence and jail,—all these come. There are two things involved in this process. One is: we find out a law that any object perceived by the human mind through the avenues of any one of the five senses immediately sets up a train of thought which is of the same nature as the object perceived. And then one thought sets about raising in the mind other thoughts associated with it. It is called the law of association. And therefore this law even dispenses with the necessity of having an object present before your eye for setting up a thought. Just from memory you think of something. Immediately that also sets into motion a train of thoughts associated with the object conjured up in the mind through memory and they found that the law of association is there operating in the realm of mind and directing our thoughts.

Also another very interesting law was found out. That is, they found that mind has got a peculiar, I may call it a very dangerous and nasty, habit. It is a headache for all seekers. It has got this pernicious habit of making a lightning record of whatever sense contact that a human being makes. In passing you may speak some words, see some persons, you may undergo some experience; immediately a lightning record leaves a Samskara, and why it is very important to the Yogin is due to the very peculiar nature of this Samskara. Samskara is not merely a dead-line drawn upon a canvas, but it is a live record, and I shall explain to you what a live record means. There is a photographic record. If anything comes across a sensitive plate, immediately it takes an image of it and keeps it for ever, but that is only a dead impression. That image which a photographic plate has taken upon itself cannot come and talk to you. But then, this Samskara is an impression taken by the mind which has got in itself the capacity to once again recreate in the individual the entire experience which originally caused it. It is a very important aspect of the nature of a Samskara that gets into a human mind through any chance contact or activity or experience that the individual happens to go through. Each Samskara has inherent in it the capacity to once again recreate that very experience which originally caused it. And you will understand it perfectly if I tell you an analogy in our external life. What is it? Out of a big tree we get a small seed as a product of that tree. The tree is vast, but the seed is very small. But then what is the tremendous capacity of this seed, even though it looks so small? It has got inherent in itself the ability or the power to once again recreate in all fullness and in all details the entire tree which originally brought it about. Given proper conditions and given the favourable factors for it to spring into dynamism, this little seed can once again recreate in entirety all details of the tree which was the cause for its coming into being. Thus it is with Samskara.

Supposing someone gave you something to taste. The actual taste is only over an area of two inches or three inches, on the tongue. Before the thing comes in contact with your tongue, there is no taste. Once it goes down into the throat there is no taste. You experience the taste only as long as the thing is on your tongue. Yet this little experience is immediately captured and kept in the mind as a Samskara. Supposing you happen to pass through that particular city or town where ten years ago you happened to taste that thing, when you pass through that city or town, the memory comes, "In 1945 I ate this thing, and I ate it in that particular locality." Suppose you are sitting somewhere. Once you think of it, you begin to imagine how beautiful it was, how it melted in your mouth, and it starts sensory reaction and this imagination immediately makes the Samskara take the form of desire. First the Samskara lies as a Vasana and the Vasana rises as a Vritti and mentally the whole process is recreated and this process of recreation through the power of imagination crystallises as a desire. And once the desire arises, the being at once tries to fulfil it. He becomes a slave of that desire. If a desire comes, then an effort to fulfil it becomes the nature of the normal human being. Immediately the ego-sense says, "I must take it", and the ego also identifies itself with the desire, but if the ego has the higher discriminative part, instead of identifying itself with the desire, it tries to identfy itself with the higher discriminative faculty, the Buddhi, which says, "I don't want this". But normally the ego is not endowed with the faculty of discrimination and it also identifies itself with the desires, and orders are given to the various senses. Immediately you look into the telephone directory and see the number of the shop where you can purchase the thing that you want. If you succeed in finding the number, you at once place an order over the phone. If you cannot find the number of the shop, you take a taxi and go to the shop and then the experience is once again re-created. You sit there, order for the dish and experience it. This experience leaves another Samskara, or intensifies your old Samskara.

The process of Yoga demands the frying of Samskaras. Put a seed in frying pan and roast it over the fire. Supposing you then sow that seed in the soil, then it will not sprout forth, because the life-principle has been completely roasted out. So is the case in Samadhi. I am talking to you about one Samskara which is so very powerful, whereas there are countless thousands of Samskaras. Every day from morning till night we go on accumulating sense-experiences, whether we are aware of it or not.

Everything that we experience is turned into a Samskara. Every moment of our waking life, we go on acquiring Samskaras. Therefore, they say that it is impossible to kill all the Samskaras one by one. If you drop an atom bomb, thousands of people will be killed simultaneously. Similarly the weapon they gave is Samadhi, the experience of super-consciousness, which they say will fry once for all, all Samskaras, so that they cannot recreate the experiences which originally created them. The frying of the Samskaras is the method of Yogins, and this is brought about by intense meditation, and with the Nasa or annihilation of Samskaras, man is freed from bondage. This is the process of Yoga. This was one of the discoveries that they made when they went into the research of the mind. The whole of Raja Yoga can be said to be the method of frying the Samskaras of the mind.

HINTS ON PRACTICAL SADHANA

WHAT IS DIVINE LIVING?

What is Yoga-Vedanta? What is divine living? Yoga-Vedanta is the concern of divine life. Divine life is a life based upon Yoga and pervaded by the spirit of Vedanta. This is divine life, and it is made up of selflessness, service, Sadhana and self-realisation. So Yoga and Vedanta form the very fabric of divine life, or the stuff out of which divine life is made. and naturally therefore, the more we know about it, the more we are reminded about its important aspects, the better equipped we will be in order to live the divine life, because the most important thing about divine life is in the living of it, not so much in the knowing of it. but the importance of knowing lies in the plain fact that if you have to live it, you must know something of it, so that with this knowledge, you will be able to live it more effectively. So knowledge also is necessary, but the most important thing is the living of it, and in the living of a life of Yoga, a life of practical Vedanta, we come across several hurdles, and we are faced many times with situations which we have to manage with intelligence, with knowledge, and therefore, discussion of these matters and thorough knowledge about the intricacies, the inner subtleties of these things will put us in a very good position, so that we may be able to deal with these situations which crop up before us in our life of Yoga and Vedanta during the course of our leading the divine life.

THE DHARMAKSHETRA

What are the things we have to understand? Plainly we have to understand facts about Yoga, and Vedanta, because these are the ways through which we have to lead our divine life, and approach Divinity and attain bliss. But then what do we mean by Yoga and Vedanta and all such internal sciences? Where are they? Are they only in the books or are they in particular places like the Himalayas or Uttarakashi or Mecca or anywhere? Supposing they are there, the next question arises whether they are only there and nowhere else, or the more important, is it necessary for us to find their location elsewhere also? They are in the books in one aspect and in some aspect they are in places like Rishikesh, Mecca. There is a meaning in going to such sacred places, because the people who lived there have lived their life practically, and they have left the stamp of their life in the very ether of those places. The whole atmosphere is pervaded by the spirit of Yoga and Vedanta, and therefore, when you live there, it evokes in you the similar spirit, but the most important place where all divine life, all Yoga and Vedanta is to be practised, is the Dharmakshetra which constitutes of the mind and the heart of man. Divine life has to be lived in the mind and in the heart. Yoga has to be achived here (in the heart). Vedanta has to be achieved here, and if it is not here, it will not be found anywhere else. Vedanta and Yoga have to come from the heart and mind. How are you to demonstrate your Jnana, Bhakti, selfless service, Yoga? You have to manifest them through the thoughts that you think, through the words that you utter and through the actions that you do. All the scriptures of the world will be of no avail unless you begin to manifest them through your personal being. Sadhana Vedanta, Yoga, the whole thing has to be lived here. The most important locality for all Yoga, Vedanta and divine life is within the man, and therefore one must understand oneself. One must first of all understand this mysterious Dharmakshetra where all these things have to be worked out. Then only one will be able to set about in a proper way on the path of Yoga, Vedanta and divine life.

MIND MAKES HEAVEN AND HELL

Whatever you are, you cannot run away from yourself. If you think that family bondage is a great obstacle for living a life of Nivritti, you can shake off family. You can run away from your home or city. All right. You can become an Avadhoota. You can take off pant and coat, and wear only a Kaupeena. If you think that the company of men is not congenial, you can renounce their company. In fact, many people come here on account of bad company obtaining in the towns, but here also they complain of bad company. If you do not want to prepare rotti, you have to stand before someone who prepares rotti. All right, you go away from family, from things and from company of people but the peculiar thing is that you cannot run away from yourself, and what does it mean? You have to take your tongue, you have to take all the senses with you and together with your senses, you have to take the habits to which the senses are slaves. If you are a tobacco addict, then you will feel the tobacco call even if you go to Uttarakashi and thus you take all the senses with you. You take all your habits and idiosyncrasies wherever you go and you take your mind with you, with its Raga-Dvesha, love and hatred.

TWO VIRAKTAS

There is a fine story which Sri Gurudev once told. There were two Avadhootas. They were Maha Viraktas. They used to live with only a Kaupeena. In winter they used to spread straw and sleep, and both of them used to have straw. It is difficult to get sunlight in Uttarakashi, and whenever the sun comes, they take the grass-bed and put it in the sun, so that it may get a little warm. One Avadhoota was drying his grass-bed, while the other Avadhoota who was returning from Kshetra in his own inner thoughts, trod upon that grass-bed. Immediately the first Avadhoota got wild and shouted, "Can't you see this straw, put for drying?" The idea of mineness cropped up and they began to abuse each other. It is not a mere piece of imagination, Kalpana, but it is an actual incident which took place in Uttarakashi.

SHAVE VASANAS

That is why Swamiji says, you have to shave the Vasanas, not merely the head. The Avadhoota had taken his own mind and Vasanas. He had the sense of mineness. This feeling itself is the jugglery of the mind. In Hinduism, *"Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma"*—Everything is Brahman Himself. There is no devil. In all other religions there is a God and there is a devil. Satan is there in Christianity, Arhiman is there in Parsi's religion, but in Hinduism, everything is Brahman. Then where is the devil? It is in the mind only. Therefore, whether you live in Uttarakashi or in Bombay, you cannot escape your senses and mind, and as long as you do not know how to deal with them, how to manage them, they will continue to manage you and deal with you in a summary manner, and what will happen to you ultimately? Your Virakti and all those things will go away. Unless one delves within and tries to understand the inner machinery, one cannot practise Sadhana successfully. The inner machinery will follow you wherever you go. You cannot leave it in Bombay and come and work here, but even then, without mind you cannot think of God; without it you cannot concentrate and meditate; without it there is no Smarana and Dhyana. Without mind and emotions, thoughts, and feelings, you cannot have Bhav, Bhakti. Therefore, the mind is the instrument. It is necessary, and at the same time if it is not properly understood and managed, it becomes your own undoer. Therefore, it is a necessary evil which has to be turned into a boon. How to purify the Asuddha Manas—the impure mind. Give it battle, punish it, chastise it, purify it and convert it into Suddha Manas so that it becomes your friend,—this is also no less a part of Yoga than Kirtan, Japa and the like. Every aspirant has to use his intelligence and has to manage the important task of dealing with senses and the mind. You can manage an unruly thing, only if you understand it. Unless he who drives the horse, knows his habits, he cannot manage it. Therefore, this is a very important part of Sadhana.

WHAT IS MIND?

The vast number of people know only that mind is thought. Mind is something with which we think. It is not so easy like that. Even if you do not want to think, the mind will simply think. It thinks of objects. It was a very hot and sultry day in the school. Suddenly a boy got tired and he got bored and he gave a piercing whistle, and when the teacher questioned him why he did it, the boy replied, "I did not whistle. It whistled itself". Similarly the mind is thinking its own thoughts every minute. As long as the mind is producing thoughts, the mind cannot concentrate. You have to divert it to God. But how to do it? Why does the mind wander about? All these an aspirant has to understand. A Karma Yogin has to understand it, a Jnana Yogin has to understand it, a Bhakti Yogin has to understand it.

You have to understand it whether you are alone or amidst people. On the other hand when you are alone, mind gets an opportunity to have its full play. What is this mysterious thing, which is such a problem for the Sadhaka, without which he cannot do Sadhana, but which if not managed, pulls him down? How does the mind work? If we could have a basic knowledge of its nature, then we can hope of devising some means of gaining control over it.

WAYS OF THE MIND

The mind works in various mysterious ways, and we will analyse some important broad aspects of this mental process. At a given moment, what is the mind of a person? What is it made up of? I will try to explain with easy analogies. First of all let us take two analogies. You take a gramophone plate. What is it made up of? Ordinarily, you see a plate and you see it is made up of grooves, full of lines. For an ordinary illiterate person it will mean nothing more than this. A little more intelligent and educated person will say that it contains lines and these lines are sounds in silent form. A still more intelligent person will say something else. He will say that each groove has got a specific sound. It is in the nature of an effect. This sound is identical with the sound that caused it. A more intelligent and learned man will say under what particular circumstances, it will produce sound.

Another analogy. You take a seed. A child will say it is a very tiny thing, but a more thinking mind, a poet, will say, "In your hand lies a towering oak, which can shelter a thousand people." And a still more deserving person will say, "This seed can produce an oak and produce the same type of oak out of which it came, and not only that, if that tree can produce further seeds, it means it has got in it the capacity to restart and fully manifest once again the whole process, which was at the back of it." And therefore, it is a living thing. It is a dynamic thing. It contains in itself the whole cycle. Similarly the mind of each person at a given time contains within it words within words. It is a thing of the nature of grooves on a gramophone record or of the nature of the seed. What are these seeds, what are these grooves that are in the mind? The mind is a product of experience, previous experience.

Just in exactly what way is it a product of experience? We shall take just one instance, and we can multiply it *ad infinitum.*

HIDDEN VASANAS

There is an experience. The experience may be in the form of a perception. You smell something, touch something, taste something, or experience a combination of so many things, and immediately just as a groove is created out of a sound in a gramophone plate, so also an impression is put in the mind. This impression is called Samskara, an impression got out of a perceptional experience in the mind. What is the nature of Samskaras? Is it like a furrow made on the ground or the grooves in the gramophone record? No. It is dynamic, and a number of such experiences making grooves upon the human mind makes that impression deep and vital. It becomes active, it begins to be a dynamic factor in the man's life, i.e. it becomes a dynamic tendency in the person's character, and when it comes to this stage, the repeated taking in of a particular impression, makes it take the form of a vital or living force in the person's character. It becomes a trait in the Sadhaka's character. It is called Vasana. That means the being always tends to move in that direction, and always tends to behave according to that urge. So Samskaras when repeated become Vasanas, and these Vasanas always keep the mind in a state of agitation, and they always go on producing ripples in the mind-lake, which are called Vrittis.

VRITTIS

Therefore, in the ordinary mind, so many Vrittis are rising and sinking. When the Vrittis arise in the mind, the individual starts a series of Kalpanas. You begin to build a Kalpana or imagination. If the Kalpana is not there, the Vrittis do not trouble the man. When the Vrittis are supported by creating imagination or Kalpana, it makes the Vritti take the form of a desire, Iccha, and what is the nature of this desire, which is formed through the force of imagination or Kalpana? It is of the same variety as the experience that formed the Samskara which again became the cause for the rise of the Vritti. Even at this stage of desire, Iccha, there is not great harm. But when the play of ego, the 'I', in each one of us identifies itself with that desire, there starts all the trouble. Instead of 'Want', it takes the form of 'I want'. Now the individual is in the grip of the mind. Whether you reside in a cave or in a city, when 'I' and Kalpana join together, you feel "I want to have a chit chat, I want a cigarette". When Iccha, is identified with Ahankara, all troubles arise. You may be doing meditation, but when you get Iccha for a particular object, then meditation becomes secondary. You go about for fulfilling your desire. But then, the mind has got two aspects. When a desire comes, it thinks, "Should I fulfil this desire? Or should I continue my meditation? Should I go and take Iddali and waste time? Now then there is Vichara. If the proper direction, the Suddha Manas, gets the upper hand, it says 'No' and it pushes off the desire and continues meditation. If on the other hand the mind gives way to Asuddha Manas, the desire gets the upper hand. Then the Iccha becomes a Trishna, a strong impelling urge, and due to this craving, what happens? The person immediately strives to fulfil the desire and he falls from Yoga.

PROCESS OF THE DESIRE

Yoga is not only in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. It is in every moment. If a thought comes and if you are not able to put it down, you have failed in Yoga, you have failed in the examination. In every thought, in every action you have to assert your mastery over your Vrittis. Then Yoga is fulfilled, divine life is lived, and what is the time taken for this process? It is a moment. Within a split second so many frames (cinema films) go away. Similar is the case with the mind. The entire process takes place in a split second, starting from the Samskaras and ending with Cheshta or fulfilling of the desire. From experience you get Samskara, from Samskara you get Vasana, from Vasana you get Vritti. Then imagination makes the Vritti into a desire. Then ego attaches itself to the desire and it becomes then an urge, a Trishna. Then you are forced to do Cheshta or to fulfil the desire. This process of the mind is going on.

MIND—PERPETUAL MACHINERY

The scientists are trying to find a perpetual motion machinery, a machinery that never stops, but is always in motion. If you have to find a perpetual motion machinery, now, it is in you, the mind. We have to deal with the mind. All the Vasanas, Samskaras, which you have formed are already there, you cannot help it. But you can at least do one thing. You can prevent the formation of new Samskaras. And also let the past Samskaras be not further strengthened by fresh ones. How it is possible? Daily you get new experiences, daily you perceive so many things with your five organs of senses. Then how can we prevent these experiences making impression upon the mind? Is there any technique? How did these objects get into the mind and form Samskaras? Take an object. You perceive it, through any one of your senses. First there is contact between the sense and the object. That is the first thing, and then what happens? So far only the outer fringe of man's personality has been touched. Supposing you are very deeply absorbed in some task, and your brother or sister comes and lays his or her hands on you; you are not aware; because the object has only contacted the sense, but the sense has not conveyed it to the mind, because the mind is away from it. The objects have contacted the senses, and the senses have conveyed it to the mind, but if you are not there, if the sense of 'I' is not there, the impression taken by the mind as a matter of routine, makes no meaning to the person. So, if the ego is not there, the object does not go deep into the mind. If the ego is engaged in some other thought, a particular impression brought by the senses will not produce any effect. But if the 'I' is there, the object goes and impinges upon your awareness, and if this 'I' is in a state of heedlessness, is not vigilant, is in a state of Aviveka or is in a state of worldliness or Rajas, it will easily take these perceptions and create in you a desire, for the objects.

BURN UP DESIRES

If you are not alert and full of Vairagya, and self-denial, then the moment the objective awareness is created in you, you run after that object. The man sees money and immediately he wants it. Supposing it has come upto this stage; then there is only one way of escape. What can you do? You can simply set a match to that desire, and burn up that desire. Reduce that desire to ashes. But how? There is only one fire to burn all desires. Nachiketas had that fire. So many attractive and alluring things were offered by Yama, he offered money, beauty, strength, power, kingdoms and lordship over all worlds, all Vidyas. He gave glowing descriptions of the whole attractive and alluring worlds, but Nachiketas reduced all such desires to ashes, because Nachiketas had that one fire, and that was Mumukshutva, aspiration. Aspiration is a positive fire in which all desires, cravings are thrown and reduced to ashes. This is the fire that should characterise all Sadhakas, Yogins, Vedantins, those who lead the divine life.

BE A TRUE DISCIPLE

The disciple of Gurudev Swami Sivananda, should have a furnace of aspiration. Then only he is the real disciple of Gurudev. If we wish to call ourselves as true disciples of Gurudev Swami Sivananda, it is expected of us to bear in mind the characteristic and the distinct features of the discipleship of such a sage. It is the fire of burning aspiration which is the primary and common characteristic of such a discipleship. If you want to lead the divine life, your inner heart should be a place of aspiration; a fire of Yoga should burn inside you always. This blaze should be there. You cannot completely change the outward mode of life, but inwardly there should be aspiration. This fire should burn day and night, when you are alone, when you are among men, when you are in meditation, when you are engaged in work. This fire should not be put out. This aspiration should always form an integral part of your being. Then you are living the divine life. If this fire is there, you need not worry what work you are doing, in which place you are living. Because, you will be leading the divine life. You cannot be a victim of sense-pleasures. But you must at any time know if in spite of your vigilance, an object goes to the inner consciousness, how to burn it through aspiration. There are two techniques —Pratyahara and Udaseenata. The first technique is to always keep the mind indrawn. Never allow the mind to be completely extrovert, so that even apparently when you are moving amidst objects, the senses are not outgoing, the senses are turned inward. This is a very difficult technique, but this has to be practised. This Pratyahara is very essential. It is a very difficult and intricate technique, but it is possible to perfect it. The ideal of the aspirant should always be to acquire this important qualification, Pratyahara.

UDASEENATA OF THE MIND

The second way is to be indifferent towards the object. What does it mean to you? It does not mean anything to you at all. If a non-vegetarian goes into the bazar where they sell fish, poultry, etc., his mouth may water, but supposing he is a pure vegetarian and he goes and sees these things. To him these will not mean anything at all. He is not interested in them. Even so, we will have to create an attitude within ourselves by constant reflection, constant Svadhyaya of scriptures which show the vanity of the world, the worthlessness of earthly objects, and the perishable nature of the entire creation. By constantly imbibing such thoughts, an attitude of mind is created when all things cease to have any meaning to you and then, even when these things come, there is no response from within. This state is called Udaseenata. You are simply not interested, and when there is a thing which you do not like, you are not interested in it. This is the experience of people in respect of the things which they do not like. Whenever they see a thing which they do not like, they are not interested in it. This attitude of not being interested in a thing should be universalised. An aspirant should hold an attitude of indifference when he is in the midst of objects. This has to be cultivated. This is not a technical thing like Pratyahara, but this attitude of mind can gradually be cultivated and the degree of its intensity can also be increased. Thus in this way by Pratyahara and Udaseenata, we can effectively burn away the objects at their initial contact with the senses. If you have to live amidst objects, you can cut away contact with the objects by these two processes. But if in spite of that, the sense-perception goes right into your inner chambers, then reject it, burn it, through the fire of aspiration. This way you have to move in the world. You should have this equipment.

KEEP THE MIND FIXED ON SOMETHING

There is also a positive way. You cannot remove all the objects from the world. You cannot remove all people from the world. You have to live in the world. Therefore a very interesting method is given. A saint has said that if you want to go through a forest of thorns, you cannot cover the forest with a carpet, in order to manage to walk safely. Instead of trying to cover the entire forest with a carpet, a wise man will wear a pair of slippers. It is as effective as covering the entire forest with carpet, because wherever he goes, this protection will follow him. In the same way, we cannot completely make the world disappear, but we can protect ourselves in such a way that we are not affected by the contact, and this way, through Pratyahara and Udaseenata we have to protect ourselves from the objects creating impressions in our minds. And the positive way is this: always keep the mind fixed upon something. If you have to go through a place which emits a foul smell, you cannot sprinkle the whole place with some fragrant element. But if you keep a bit of musk in your nose, you will always experience the smell of the musk, you will not feel the bad smell. Similarly, always do mental repetition of God's name and do Nama-Smarana, constant remembrance of God and remembrance of some great ideal. Vedantins will say, "All is Brahman—Satchidananda". Bhaktas will say, "All is Rama or all is Krishna", along with the constant repetition of Mahavakyas or Ishta Mantra. These things form a positive hold to which the mind may cling. Thus the tendency of the mind to move towards other objects is lessened, because it is given a centre which it can catch hold of.

REMOVE IDENTIFICATION WITH DESIRES

These are the commonsense methods which a man who wants to live a life of Yoga and practical Vedanta should have as his equipment. As I told you, we cannot run away from our senses and mind.

We have, therefore, to understand the working of the mind, and therefore, when a Vritti arises, do not think about it, let it sink back. Do not imagine. It is imagination that strengthens it. Do not identify yourself with the desire, and if the worse comes to the worst, if the desire is strong, be stubborn, do not give expression to it. Gurudev has always said, "Try always to nip the desire in the bud. When a desire comes in the form of a ripple, try to liquidate it then and there itself. But if due to lack of your vigilance it takes the form of a desire, see that it is not fulfilled. Do not make Cheshta outwardly. If a desire comes, "I could go and gossip", say, "No," "I will not allow the body to move". If the body does not move, the mind is helpless, and ultimately the reverse process will happen, and the desire will sink back into the mind, and there will be calmness.

SADHANA FOR MIND-CONTROL

In the beginning of the Sadhana, more and more desires will have to be controlled at the physical level, but as we go on acquiring mastery over ourselves, even when a Vritti comes, it is liquidated. This is done by Vichara and Viveka. These, Vichara and Viveka, are helps to the Sadhaka. As soon as a Vritti comes, it is put back, and ultimately all these have to be completely destroyed by repeating the Lord's name, by meditation, by prayer, by practising

Purascharana. All these are powerful, positive methods, because the Vrittis and Samskaras are countless and deep-rooted, but they are destroyed in toto by the practice of Yoga, with sincerity. All Vasanas, etc., which form obstacles on the path of the Sadhaka are completely liquidated through Japa, Kirtan, prayer, Satsanga, Svadhyaya. Ultimately the work is done by these combined methods but in the meanwhile we have to deal with the mind by Viveka and Vichara, so that the mind is never allowed to take the form of a desire.

STUDY THE MIND

In this way, the more we understand the machinery, the more we will be able to deal with it, with all its subtle tricks and under-currents and we will be able to make use of the mind as an effective instrument of Sadhana instead of its being a constant obstacle inside ourselves. All the most ideal conditions may be given to a Sadhaka. He may have ideal surroundings, ideal company, all books, yet if he does not do this important task of trying to understand the mysterious nature of the workings of the mind and try to lessen his Vasana and strengthen his will-power, he cannot make use of anything. He cannot make use of his Guru. He cannot make use of his Ekantata, because they have to be made use of only through the mind and if the mind is not controlled, cultivated, he cannot make use of these. But once that is done, he can make use of all that God has given. Even a sentence from a scripture is enough to raise a flood of spiritual consciousness within him. Therefore, understand the mind, study the mind and know this machinery well, and know also how to manage it. This is an important part of Yoga, an important part of Vedanta, an important part of Sadhana, or divine life. In the beginning of one's practice, all these are important. When one has practised all these, God-realisation is easy. They say that God-realisation is so easy that it can be attained within the time taken to squeeze a flower, once you are completely rid of all impurities, when you have become an Uttama Adhikari. For that, you have to patiently work, and the more we devote our time with humility, sincerity and earnestness to a study of our own being and this machinery which is inside, the mind, and the more attention we give, having a knowledge of this Yogic instrument, the more we will be able to succeed in the path of Yoga and Vedanta and living a divine life.

UPPER AND LOWER MIND

We have seen how the whole of the living of the divine life and all the processes of Yoga and practical Vedanta, take place primarily within the mind. Outwardly these processes that take place inside, have their expression; they manifest themselves in the form of certain behaviour of the person and his reactions to external influences in the form of certain actions that he indulges in, but primarily they take place in the inner Kurukshetra, the mind. An eternal tussle is going on in the mind between the lower, instinctive urges and the higher, spiritual aspirations, between that part of the mind which is drawing the senses outward, which is filled with Rajas and Tamas, and the Sattvic portion of the mind, the Vivekayukta Buddhi, Vicharayukta Manas, the mind where discrimination has begun to manifest, where the selective power of the human intelligence has begun to function. It begins to select which is proper, which is improper, which ought to be done, which ought not to be done, which is conducive to one's progress, which is detrimental to one's progress. When this discriminative mind begins to operate, man begins to think of the why and wherefore of things. This discrimination arises due to Satsanga, or due to hard experiences, knocks and blows of life, or due to flowering of Purva Samskaras, or due to any of the innumerable factors that go to awaken the discriminative mind. The instinctive mind, filled with desires for objects, tries to pull the man down, whereas the higher mind pulls him up. Ultimately it is the spiritual part of man that establishes its own supremacy over the lower instinctive, sensual part of his being, and fully establishes him in Atmic consciousness, which is the ultimate stage of Yoga. In this process, we have found how the mind works, how it tries again and again to catch the individual in its vicious circle of experience, Samskara, Vasana, Kalpana, Ahankara, Iccha, Kamana and Cheshta. When you do Cheshta, you again repeat the experience, and a Samskara is formed; from Samskara, Vasana originates. Vasana becomes a Vritti, which taking the help of imagination, becomes an Iccha. Iccha takes the help of egoism and becomes a Kamana and Kamana intensified becomes Trishna or strong desire and Cheshta or actual fulfilment of the desire follows Trishna and enjoyment again strengthens the Samskara, and thus the whole process is repeated again and again.

SAMSKARAS STRENGTHEN BY REPETITION

Therefore one truth comes out of this. If a desire comes and if you fulfil it then that Samskara which caused that desire, gets more strengthened. Therefore, a great truth has to be kept in mind by the aspirants that by fulfilling a desire, the desire never ends. You can never put an end to desires by fulfilling them. Just as the hungry flames will not subside by any amount of ghee poured on it, similarly the desire gets strengthened by fulfilment. Gurudev has beautifully expressed it. He says, "Non-cooperate with the mind." Do not fulfil desires, when they arise in the mind. It is the nature of the mind to desire. Mind and desire are synonymous terms. Therefore, when desires come do not fulfil them. That is the only way of attaining mastery over the mind. This is the key to success in mind-control, mind-mastery. Do not fulfil desires when they arise. Countless desires may arise; be silent. Do not say, "Come along, I will fulfil it." It is only when you make the mistake of saying, "I am the mind", "I am desiring", you commit a blunder. Just as a dog which is troublesome outside is kept in a room, similarly, you should lock the mind inside. Only when the mind is purified, it becomes your guide. Till then non-cooperate with it. Then the mind will cease to be the mover of man, but man will become the mover of the mind. You should be the independent mover of the mind. Then you become Manojit or Indriyajit. That is what an aspirant has to become a conqueror of the mind and senses. Therefore, understand this law.

SADHANA FOR MANONASA

Desires never perish by fulfilling them. If on the other hand you withdraw the fuel, the fire will be automatically put out, and the more you study and get at the root of the hidden lurking desires the better you will be in a position to root them out. The desires that come on the surface of the mind have their roots in the subconscious, and in as much as the roots are hidden, you will have to daily do the digging of the mind, and going to the root of these desires. Therefore, Gurudev has prescribed: set apart a time when there is no external distraction, and then go to a place where there is no external distraction, and sit there and feel that you are the witness of the mind. Just allow the mind to wander for a while and see how it behaves, and try to delve within. All our time we are engaged in drawing the mind outward. Make the mind inward and try to see within yourself what is going on, and it requires practice, it requires regular practice, or else we will be thinking we are looking into the mind, but in the processes, we would be going with the mind. You should delve inward, introspect. You must do a two-fold process. One is diverting the mind-rays inward, and when you go inward, focus keenly on certain part of your mind and analyse it, dissect it. If you cannot see a place which is in darkness, you throw the powerful search-light upon it. Similarly throw the mind inward and begin to see the things inside. Supposing a thing is far away, you are not able to see it. You squint through a telescope. Similarly you should analyse the part which is not visible, more minutely, you should analyse it in detail, separately, like looking through a microscope. Then you will come to know more of your mind:—what kind of Vrittis they are, whether they are Sattvic Vrittis or Rajasic Vrittis or Tamasic Vrittis. You begin to analyse intelligently. Here, we require a little bit of Viveka. We have to be careful of two things. One thing is we should not go inward with partiality. If you are studying the mind, be impartial, because this introspection is done with the purpose of ejecting out all that is undesirable and supplying all that is required. Therefore, you should humbly go about this work. If after studying the mind, you are full of self-satisfaction, if you are satisfied with whatever is there in the mind, such introspection and self-analysis will serve no purpose. Therefore, you should go with a critical attitude. Just as you find out the defects of other persons, with the same critical mind, you should find out your own defects. Otherwise, the benefit of introspection and self-analysis will be lost.

CLENISING THE MIND

If as a result of your introspection, you find in your mind certain things which are not desirable, you should find out the means of removing those defects. As I said, first of all, you must be impartial and should not try to justify what you find inside. Self-justification, self-approbation is not what is meant by introspection. You should go with a critical, fault-finding spirit, and once you find out your defects, be practical. Have some practical device to remove the defects. You should find out how to make the best capital out of what you have discovered in your moments of self-introspection and

Sadhana. This is the practical aspect of Kriya Yoga. Thorough purification can only come, if there is thorough, impartial introspection, and practical steps are taken by you to remove the defects. This introspection should be done daily. Daily you should throw out some rubbish. Then only Kriya Yoga will become effective. I would say that Kriya Yoga is the most important. This is like the foundation. Without foundation you cannot put up the building. So self-introspection, self-analysis, eradication of vices, development of virtues and being established in Sadachara come under Kriya Yoga.

IGNORE NOT SMALL ERRORS

Non-cooperate with the mind. Hunt out your defects through self-investigation, and overcome them through practical Sadhana. And together with this, we have to take two more important steps, i.e., in living the divine life, we have to give importance to each detail. Do not be too fastidious, do not worry about small details, but the fundamentals have to be kept. Stick to the fundamentals. Each Sadhaka should bear in mind that divine life is to be lived in small things. If you are divine in small details, you can be divine in big things. You cannot afford to be undivine in small things and expect to be divine in big things. If your Yoga becomes practical, if your Vedanta becomes practical in little things, then the great achievement will come as a matter of course. Here we find a serious danger. Sadhakas think that the details do not matter much. They think that it does not matter if they use a single harsh word. The Sadhaka thinks, "There is no harm in uttering a harsh word. I am quite calm inwardly. God wants only the heart", but such a heart cannot come unless every word of yours is full of love, compassion. The heart is made up of only the sum total of all little actions and little words. It is not possible to have a wonderful heart inside, and indulge in every type of actions and words. Every action goes to form one's character even as every drop goes to form the ocean. Day-to-day movements of men constitute the very essence of divine living, the essence of Yoga and Vedanta. One should not commit the mistake of running away with the idea that by merely having a great idealism only, can perfect goodness manifest in all his actions, words and thoughts. Unless one is careful in his day-to-day life and moulds his life in accordance with his idealism, idealism cannot bear fruit. If one is careful in his day-to-day life, and sees that the broad principles of divine living which go to make up the foundation of spiritual life, are observed then the edifice will come by itself.

BROAD PRINCIPLES IN YOGA

What are those broad principles? Truthfulness, compassion, purity,—these are the broad things which have to cover our entire life down to the minutest details. A Sadhaka cannot afford to forget this detailed living of divine life, and his whole life, at least in the beginning, should be characterised by restraint. He should restrain his tongue. Do not think that you can eat anything and meditate well. If a Sadhaka thinks that he can eat anything and meditate, he is deceiving himself. Yoga is not a toy, which you can easily take and play with. It is an iron-fort lodging well-equipped soldiers. Yoga is not an easy thing, though saints say that Yoga is easy in order to make it attractive to all. Therefore, every action should be done with proper examination.

SELECTION OF FOOD

The quality of food that you take, its quantity, and the time you take food, all are important. A little immoderate food or improper time of taking food may affect your system and render meditation difficult. You may not take costly food like Badam, but at least take moderate quantity, take Sattvic food. The whole body should be restrained. You should live a life of moderation. When Gurudev sings his song of "Eat a little, drink a little," we have to understand it in its proper sense. There are two parts of this song. "Eat a little, drink a little, talk a little, sleep a little". When he says these things he means 'moderation'. These things should not be done too much. These are not said in the sense that they are essential. It means that you must not overdo them.

MODERATION IN EVERYTHING

You must sleep only a little. You must talk only a little. You should not be a patient of lingual diarrhoea. Move a little. This means that you should move a little, and not waste your energy and time by moving about always. The instinctive life of eating, drinking, talking etc., should be kept to the minimum. The other portion, wherein Gurudev says, "Do Japa a little. Do Asana a little. Do Kirtan a little,"—means not that they should not be done too much, but here it is the other way round. Here, Gurudev says that everyone of these items is essential, and all these items should find a place in your daily programme. Asana, Pranayama, Japa, Kirtan, Meditation, Vichara, all these things must find a place in your daily life. They are indispensable items which should find a place in your daily routine, and the more you increase them the better. And those things of your animal nature, that life which is purely physical, sensual and bodily, such as, eating, drinking etc.—you should keep within the rational minimum. All gross things that merely pertain to the body should be kept to the minimum and all these higher aspects of Sadhana should be given proper place in your daily programme. Therefore, this is the broad general outline of divine life or spiritual living, for you. All these, Japa, meditation, Kirtan, etc., from the positive side and living a life of restraint, and not fulfilling the undue desires of the mind and senses, understanding that to fulfil such demands is to become greater and greater slaves of the mind and its promptings, and always being based upon self-restraint and inwardness and making the best use of your quiet hours in introspection and analysis, so that your Kriya Yoga may be fulfilled. This sums up the essential aspects of divine life.

SUMMING UP OF SADHANAS

Therefore remember these. Non-cooperate with the mind. Do not fulfil desires when they arise. "Nip the Vritti in the bud", as Gurudev says. Daily have self-introspection and self-analysis, and in doing that be unsparing to yourself. Do not justify what you discover in the mind and give a reason for it, but rather, try to devise suitable methods for overcoming what you find inside. Therefore Kriya Yoga, Practical Sadhana, is necessary for eradicating the defects that you find through self-introspection and self-restraint, and back the whole thing up by positive Sadhana like meditation, Japa, Asana, Pranayama, etc. Gurudev's song of "Eat a little, Drink a little" gives the basis, or the negative restraint, and also the positive aspect of your Sadhana.

And ultimately I conclude by recalling to you the two great instructions given by Sri Krishna—Vairagya and Abhyasa; for when all these things have been said and done, the underlying secret of overcoming this Vikshepa of the mind is Vairagya only. Why are you not able to control the mind through meditation? Because it runs after things. What things? It runs after the things to which it is attached. Raga is at the root of Vikshepa. Raga comes through Avichara. You imagine that the objects of the world will give you happiness. This is Avichara. You should do Vichara, discrimination; you should find out the defects of worldly pleasures and develop Vairagya towards all kinds of earthly pleasures. So there should be Vichara, there should be Vairagya, and combined with these, if you practise the things already mentioned, you will be able to progress on the path of Yoga and Vedanta, on the path of divine living.

SADHANA FOR MODERN MAN

I wish to give you a few ideas which I think will be of great practical benefit to all those who have seriously made God-realisation the main end and aim of life. Sadhana is the purpose for which we have come to this plane. This is called the Sadhana-Bhumi and it is this earth-plane alone upon which Sadhana for Self-realisation can be done. Not so in the other planes; the lower ones in hell are for working out one's bad Karmas, wrong actions, paying the penalty for sins, and the higher planes, the heavens, are for enjoying the happy fruits of merits. But from either of these, man has to come back once again to where he was before he went there. But on the earth-plane he can so live that he may pass on to an abode, an abode of eternal existence, from which he need not once again return to this plane of pains, suffering, birth and death.

Having come to this plane and having also known that the central purpose is to go above phenomena into eternity, man is faced with serious problems. On every side he sees that he is severely limited and his efforts at perfection are thwarted by these limitations. In the present age, the one vehicle for Sadhana which is very important—the human body—has degenerated most frightfully. The span of life is unutterably short and the physique is very weak. But strange and contradictory as this may seem, there arises the statement that in spite of this degeneracy on the physical plane, man has evolved enormously. Mentally he has evolved a great deal. We are at present on the threshold of a glorious dawn. We have passed through the darkest period of spiritual life. We are now about to enter into a period which will be full of spiritual illumination and quick progress. If this were so, it must indicate a certain change from a lower to the higher, a certain change from lesser to the greater. If this were so, man has really evolved mentally, and this assumption that he has evolved, we cannot deny, because we see that in Puranic times more stress was laid upon the external and the outward than the internal; might was measured in terms of lifting mountains and drinking oceans. But now we see that the emphasis has been shifted. The emphasis is laid upon Vedanta. That is the modern method.

This is based upon the assumption that the mind of man has evolved greatly. If that is so, why this moroseness? Why this despair? Why should man be lacking in Sadhana more than he was before? Either there must be something wrong with man or there must be something wrong in the methods that he employs. But we have started with the statement that everything is all right with man. Man has evolved. Man has progressed. He is much farther on the path than he was before. Then the error should be in the method. Let us see where this error lies. Why, in spite of this evolution, this progress, man still cries that he is still in darkness, that he is unable to do Sadhana? Man says, "My physique is not capable of doing severe Sadhana. I have hardly any time! The social economy has changed. Now life is based upon money. The whole atmosphere has become commercialised. I have now to work from morning till night to eke out my livelihood. I have hardly any time." This is true. The whole outward picture has changed and this despair on the threshold of hope is because man has not changed in keeping with the outward change. His methods of Sadhana are antiquated. He has evolved, the emphasis has changed from the physical to the mental plane, but he has not made a similar change in his methods of approach. He tries once again to go along physical lines. He does Japa. He tries to see that the same Tapascharya, Sadhana, is once again introduced here. But he has now to have a reorientation of his Sadhana. He should shift the emphasis of Sadhana from the physical to the mental. By shifting the emphasis it does not mean that the former method has either become obsolete or useless. It means that the new method is more strong; it is more wise, it is more useful, just as one who has outgrown the lower forms naturally goes into the University Class. We have to admit that we have limitations of time, limitations of energy, and in the face of these new set of conditions, we have to see that our Sadhana meets the limitations of these new conditions so that with all these modern changes and environments, our Sadhana current is carried on constantly amidst this change.

For this Vedanta has given the right cue. Vedanta lays all the emphasis upon mental culture. It says 'Begin your Sadhana from the mental plane' and psychology is the science that has hold upon the mental plane. Vedanta is a complete Divine Psychology. We have forgotten our real nature. What is the remedy for this? To remember it and to reassert it. This is one point of Sadhana—auto-suggestion is the mainstay, the pillar of Vedanta. It says 'Remember your lost heritage, your real nature, and reassert again and again'. For this method your hands are not required, your feet are not required; your whole body you can let throughout the day, be engaged in any activity which the economic structure of India has forced on you. At the same time you can unbrokenly carry on the divine current of the Atmic assertion. This auto-suggestion will become more a latent aptitude, than a Bhava. When it is established into a permanent Bhava then that Bhava will translate itself into practice. As you think, so you become.

For this auto-suggestion, there are two obstacles. Firstly, the impurities of mind and the vices of the social environment stand as obstacles. Two methods are prescribed for overcoming them. One is thinking of the opposite—Pratipaksha Bhavana. This is a method in which by constantly denying the presence of that which you wish to remove and asserting the presence of that which you wish to gain, i.e., asserting the opposite of your present vice, you grow into the nature of the virtues and the vice disappears. The other is the law that positive always overcomes the negative. Therefore, a set of positive assertions are constantly prescribed to be made. This overcomes the negative state of Dehadhyasa, your identification with the body and the mind, and then the identification with the Atman is reasserted. Again there is one great weight which holds down the mind from soaring into Atmic realms, that is the heavy one of Upadhis. They have got very powerful effect on mind. You are pure Atman, not the names and forms. Your essential nature is Satchidananda. But this Upadhi of body makes you think you are a person of limited strength. The first is the body Upadhi. This Upadhi has got other Upadhis. The moment you put on Western dress, your thoughts immediately plunge into Western channels, you begin to think in English, your whole line of thought becomes materialistic. The moment you put on a very fashionable and rich kind of dress, at once the egoism is puffed up. All these Upadhis limit the mind and hold it down. The power of Upadhis has also to be considered and in order to counteract them, Sattvic Upadhis are purposely prescribed. Man is asked to take Sannyasa. He is asked to wear ochre-coloured cloth. That gives a powerful colouring to the mind. He is asked to be in a room where the whole atmosphere is charged with spirituality. He is asked to do Japa, Kirtan and meditation. The mental Upadhis also are to be made Sattvic. He should do it through auto-suggestion, through Pratipaksha Bhavana, through always trying to be positive in his ways of thinking and through voluntarily taking over Divine Upadhis. The colouring of the mind should be made divine.

For those who are constantly forced to be in worldly atmosphere and who do not get time—if you ask them, they say they have already a properly set-up programme and that they cannot spare even half an hour out of it for spiritual Sadhana—only they should shift the entire emphasis of their Sadhana from physical, like sitting upon one Asana, sitting in one place and doing Kirtan, going into the meditation room etc. If these are not possible, one need not worry. What should he do? Let his Japa, his meditation, his Kirtan, all be mental. Sri Swamiji Maharaj has prescribed "You need not necessarily have a separate meditation room or fix some time for meditation. Close your eyes for a minute or two once in every two hours and think of God and His various Divine qualities, during work, repeating mentally Hari Om, or any other Mantra according to your taste." This does not mean that a meditation room and so on are all useless. Meditation room you can have. If you cannot have it, then do not give up your Sadhana. The mental repetition can be carried on throughout your hours of work. It can go on unceasingly.

"Feel all along that the body is a moving temple of God, your office or business-house a big temple or Vrindavana, and every activitiy such as walking, eating, breathing, seeing, hearing, reading, etc., are offerings unto the Lord." This is the second mental action. You can first have Sattvic imagination, Kalpana, and secondly you can cultivate Sattvic Bhava. Bhavana and Kalpana are the two things which you have to culture and once Kalpana through constant repetition, becomes a settled Bhavana, then you will find that your whole Sadhana will move along without a hitch.

'Work without the idea of agency, without any motive, and as offerings unto the Lord'. That is, every action of yours in whatever sphere of life you may be, you have to transform with this touchstone.

Let Karma become Bhajan. This mental Bhavana at once transforms even the most prosaic act into a direct worship of God. There are three points which I should like to mention. Transformation of ordinary action into divine Bhajan. Before you begin any action, imagine and try to feel that what you are about to do is a grand Bhajan of the Lord, a grand worship of the Lord who is manifest in His Virat Svarupa in everything you hear, in everything you see, in everything you touch. Then you begin the work. As you go on doing the work, every now and then try to feel that this work is not being done by you. You are mere instrument and it is the Omnipresent power of the Lord that is working through you. Completely negate the idea of agency and doership. Try to feel that the Sakti of the Lord is working through you. With this feeling you carry on the work to its logical conclusion. The third point you have to note is that when you have finished the Karma, do so as an offering to the Lord. Let your last action be a whole-hearted Arpanam—Krishnarpanam. When you start, feel that you are doing it as a mere instrument of the Lord and let the day close with the Krishnarpanam of the whole day's work. Thus everything will become a worship of the Lord and every action will be transformed into divine worship through your putting the emphasis upon Bhavana. So, Bhava is the one basis to which man has to cling in the present age. He has no escape from the necessity of work. Materialistic life forces him to work for his livelihood. Thus, in whatever circumstances he is placed, let him see that he generates this Bhava through repeated imagination and makes his Bhava a permanent portion of his Being. Thus his whole life will become a continuous worship of the Lord. By shifting thus the emphasis from the physical to mental, he is living the life of incessant Sadhana in any circumstance where God has placed him. In an incredibly short time he will see that the whole world stands transformed before him. He will begin to feel the Lord constantly and he will feel the presence of the Lord everywhere.

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED

I. To Disseminate Spiritual Knowledge

(a) By publication of books, pamphlets and magazines dealing with ancient, oriental and occidental philosophy, religion and medicine in the modern scientific manner, and their distribution on such term as may appear expedient to the Board of Trustees;

(b) By propagating the Name of the Lord, and by holding and arranging spiritual discourses and conferences and frequent Sankirtans or spiritual gatherings for singing and glorifying the Name of the Lord;

(c) By establishing training centres or societies for the practice of Yoga, for moral and spiritual Sadhanas and the revival of true culture, to enable aspirants to achieve regeneration through worship, devotion, wisdom, right action and higher meditation with systematic training in Asanas, Pranayama, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi; and

(d) By doing all such acts and things as may be necessary and conducive to the moral, spiritual and cultural uplift of mankind in general and to the attainment of the above-mentioned objects in Bharatavarsha in particular;

II. To Establish and Run Educational Institutions

On modern lines and on right basic principles and to help deserving students by granting them refundable and non-refundable scholarships for doing research work in the various branches of existing scriptures and comparative religion, as also to train them to disseminate spiritual knowledge in the most effective manner;

III. To Help Deserving Orphans and Destitutes

By rendering them such assistance as the Society may deem proper, whether in any individual case or in any particular class of cases;

IV. To Establish and Run Medical Organisations

Or any other medical institutions and hospitals or dispensaries for the treatment of diseases and dispensing medicines and performing surgical operations, etc., to the poor in particular and to the other public in general, on such terms and in such manner as may be deemed expedient by the Board of Trustees;

V. To Take Such Other Steps From Time to Time

As may be necessary for effecting a quick and effective moral and spiritual regeneration in the world and in Bharatavarsha in particular.

This Society was registered as a Trust in the year 1936 and has been actively functioning since then to fulfil the above sublime aims and objects in the world.

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc. No. 3016 (D)
Dated 3/2/2016